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THE NATIONAL ANTHEM

J. HARTLEY MANNERS

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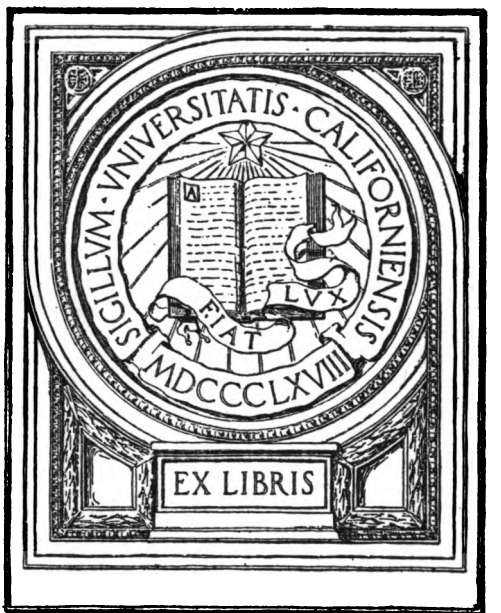

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THE NATIONAL ANTHEM

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BY J. HARTLEY MANNERS

THE NATIONAL ANTHEM

THE HARP OF LIFE
A Play in Three Acts

THREE PLAYS
God's Outcast: All Clear and
God of My Faith

HAPPINESS
and Two Other Plays

WRECKAGE
A Drama in Three Acts

OUT THERE
A Dramatic Composition in
Three Parts, on the World War

THE WOOING OF EVE
A Comedy in Three Acts

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THE NATIONAL ANTHEM

A DRAMA

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

BY

J. HARTLEY MANNERS

NEW YORK
GEORGE H. DORAN COMPANY

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UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

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THE NATIONAL ANTHEM. I

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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TO

LAURETTE TAYLOR

AND HER LOYAL ASSOCIATES

WHO DID SO MUCH TO MAKE IT MEMORABLE,

I DEDICATE THIS PLAY,

IN ADMIRATION AND HIGH REGARD.

THE AUTHOR

CPC 918

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[Reproduction of Original Programme.]

Produced at Henry Miller's Theatre, New York,
on Monday, January 23rd, 1922.

LAURETTE TAYLOR

in

THE NATIONAL ANTHEM

A Play in Four Acts

By J. Hartley Manners

Produced under the Personal Direction of the Author
Management of A. L. Erlanger and George C. Tyler

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THE CHARACTERS

MARIAN HALE	*Laurette Taylor*
MADELINE TRENT	*Miss Lillian Kemble Cooper*
MAUD-ETHEL	*Miss Jo Wallace*
ETTA	*Miss Greta Kemble Cooper*
ARTHUR CARLTON	*Mr. Ralph Morgan*
JOHN K. CARLTON	*Mr. Dodson Mitchell*
TOM CARROL	*Mr. Frank M. Thomas*
REUBEN HALE	*Mr. Richie Ling*
JIM PICKET	*Mr. Robert Hudson*
NED SCOOFY	*Mr. Ray Wilson*
DR. VIRANDE	*Mr. Paul Porcasi*
WAITER	*Mr. William Armstrong*

THE SCENES

Act I—NORTHCHESTER	Summer
Act II—NEW YORK	Winter
Act III—PARIS	Spring
Act IV THE SAME	The Afternoon of the Tenth Day

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FOREWORD

THE NATIONAL ANTHEM OF CIVILIZATION

This is the Age of the Young.

Civilization is to be built anew by them.

The old standards have been found wanting.

They brought about destruction.

New ones are to be founded—by the Young.

The War shattered the old: stunned the middle-aged.

The ideals they had clung to so long disappeared.

It is for them to give all they have—their strength, their faith, to help the Young found the new Civilization.

The call has gone out to Youth.

How has it been answered?

Those of them who came back from the War, having done all that was asked of them, instinctively flew to forgetfulness of what they had suffered.

It was natural. It has always been the outcome of conflict. After the fight the craving to forget in pleasure.

But—those who were too young to brave the dangers of 1914-1918, now reaching an age when they can help?

How have they responded?

Alas! they, too, have followed the craving for pleasure, without the excuse of Service nobly given.

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They are following it to-day—undisciplined, unlicensed, degrading.

The old and the middle-aged are too feeble, too discouraged to check them. They meekly yield to the reckless importunity of the conscience-less Young.

Just as it is the duty of Age to protect Youth so that it may re-create civilization so it is the mission of Youth to step bravely to the Front and accept the responsibility it has been born to shoulder.

Too many give not a thought to their very evident duty.

From morn until night how often they think only of how the hours may be speeded in unhealthy activities, ribald conversation and the most vulgar of sensuous excitement.

There are three curses to-day menacing the Young:—drink, the blare of the dancing-craze and the automobile.

Drinking has become romantic.

Dancing, shorn of all its old-time beauty, is but a pandering to the dawn of awakening lusts.

The automobile driven by mere children, is the crowning example of the *New Freedom.* Through its mis-use have arisen many modern tragedies: tragedies of Youth.

The old deference and respect of boy to girl, young man to young woman has passed. The girl exacts none: the boy has no instinct to proffer it.

Rudeness has taken the place of courtesy. Slang, innuendo, and crude *double-entendre* provide the major portion of their conversation.

The old are pushed into the back-ground.

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They have taken their places there without a murmur.

Tired, world-weary, they wait for the final release.

The Young rarely think of them. When they speak of them it is with some current, happy turn-of-phrase—*"Dumb-bells."*

They are objects of derision since *pity*, to-day, finds no place in Youth's curriculum.

Religion has been banished: a sop to children and the weak-minded.

"Good-times" is the slogan.

And back of *Youth* beat the tom-toms, and blare the horns, and scream the discords of modern civilization's saturnalia—*Jazz.*

It has the Young by the throat.

It is the post-graduation from Youth to Manhood, from girl to woman.

It is the diploma, the mark of the really civilized!

Jazz!

What a mental picture rises as one sees the word in print.

Civilization chants its tune as an anthem.

And bodies writhe and intermingle and brains rattle in skulls as the ghastly jigging procession circles under blazing lights to the cheap, deafening 'music'(!) of the tire-less orchestras.

It will pass.

It *must*—if the new civilization is to be founded.

Jazz represents, in part, the revolt against restriction: against Puritanism: and the century-old fight—age versus youth. To-day the struggle is less intense since

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Youth has thrown off such nineteenth-century shackles as veneration and affection.

How seldom one sees the mingling of old and young. How beneficial it might be to both.

Cromwell, amongst other lesser things, proved that barriers create incentives.

So Prohibition has brought the hip-flask and exalted its wearer to the ranks of heroism.

Anti-vice societies occupy columns in the newspapers with their activities. And *Youth* greedily snatches at the modern dance for the quickening of lusts and the automobile for their gratification.

Restrictive laws weaken character.

Protect people from themselves by law and you foster a race of weaklings.

The publicity given to societies who, in banishing segregated vice spread it all through healthy communities, is a keen incentive to a section of the Young with no ideals, no reverence, no respect. It arouses unhealthy curiosity, morbid cravings and premature passions.

And so the sexes mingle in degrading embrace to tunes the Indian and the Negro would despise, and emulate publicly the indecency philanthropic men and women are spending time and money to check among the less-fortunate classes.

Jazz has become a Dance of Death—the Death of Youth.

Decency, veneration and mutual respect are left behind with the cloaks and hats in the tiring-rooms of the jazz-palaces.

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How long will it last?

Until the dawn of the new *Youth* proclaims the coming of the new *Civilisation*.

Jazz is but the symbol of this generation.

It is not the *cause* of the present decadence: it is the *outcome* of it.

With higher thought, nobler ideals and a return to mutual respect and reverence jazz will revert to whence it came—to the haunts of the degenerate and the hopelessly vicious.

And Youth must do this.

Youth must awaken to the glorious possibilities that stretch before it.

How wonderful it is to be Young to-day!

There is so much to do.

Society must be re-established with such of the old customs as we can still look back on with pride at having lived amidst and sorrow at their passing, added to a newer and higher standard.

Only the Young can accomplish this re-building.

I think they will.

We are living amidst the re-action from years of privation and suffering.

In its turn will come re-action against the present vulgar and debasing practises. And the votaries of to-day will look back, years to come, in dismay and remember with loathing the degraded spectacle they presented to the people of their time.

The to-morrow of *Youth* will come.

They will rise from the slough they are in to-day.

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They will throw themselves heart-whole into helping a war-distracted world to re-build itself.

Manliness will no longer be a synonym for blackguardism: it will be once more the symbol of the gentle.

Girls and young women will cease to emulate the movements and demeanor of the harlot in public places and return to the grace and beauty of the women of former generations.

Rhythm of movement will return to the dance and music will be restored to the ball-room.

To-day hideousness, roughness, discord and loud-mouthed coarseness delight Youth.

In the near future they will have lost their magic.

The world was fashioned in beauty.

Man has made it temporarily hideous.

Beauty is our birth-right.

It is for this generation to restore it. To bring back grace and courtesy: man's high regard for woman: her instinctive looking upward to him.

Above all must be restored veneration for God, country and home.

How long must we wait?

Until Youth awakens to its obligations.

Then, and then only, will we have a world-beautiful, guided by reverence, and peopled by men and women of high hope, unbounded faith and mutual admiration and love.

J. HARTLEY MANNERS.

August, 1922

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THE PEOPLE OF THE PLAY

MARIAN HALE
MADELEINE TRENT
ETTA
MAUD-ETHEL
JOHN K. CARLTON
REUBEN HALE
ARTHUR CARLTON
TOM CARROL
JIM PICKET
NED SCOOFY
DR. VIRANDE
WAITER

Act I: NORTHCHESTER
Act II: NEW YORK
Act III: PARIS
Act IV: THE SAME. THE AFTERNOON OF THE TENTH DAY

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Written 1921

THE NATIONAL ANTHEM

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THE NATIONAL ANTHEM

Act I: NORTHCHESTER

The back-porch of a country club in Northchester. Afternoon. From within the club for some little time before the curtain rises an excellent orchestra is heard playing a series of stirring jazz tunes popular during the year 1920. After the curtain has risen little waves of chatter and youthful laughter rise and fall from the club house as the dancers approach and recede from the windows. The porch has several small tables with chairs grouped around them and on the lawn stretching from the porch are several more. At one of them is seated John K. Carlton, *a vigorous, powerful man of fifty-five. He is in a well-cut traveling suit; wears a light grey hat. All the details of his attire suggest a man of considerable means and no small personal pride. Shoes, socks, shirt and tie are of unusual quality and a single pearl pin matches the grey of his clothes. He listens to the spirited jazz music and unconsciously keeps time to its infectious gaiety with his head, his fingers and his feet, though to judge by the stern,*

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somewhat grim expression on his face his mind is far from dancing.

A sunburnt ground attendant, in shirt-sleeves, the shirt rolled up and held by elastic bands, tools in hand, crosses from behind the club-house. As he hears the music his steps quicken and he disappears jigging awkwardly and humming the tune.

Two small caddies appear from the right of the lawn with nets on poles, chatting and laughing. They also hear the music, one ejaculates: "Gee" and taking the other by the shoulders they jazz clumsily off.

A WAITER *comes from within, down the steps, with a tray on which is a long glass of lemonade with straws. He goes to the table at which Carlton is seated, puts glass down and hands Carlton a check to sign. Whilst he is signing it the* WAITER *jazzes unconsciously to the music. Carlton hands the waiter the check who instantly stops jazzing.*

CARLTON

I've signed my son's name. I'm not a member.

WAITER

[*Glances at check.*] Oh, yes, Sir. Mr. Arthur Carlton. That will be all right. [*Involuntarily twitching to dance.*]

CARLTON

What's the name of that ——? [*Indicating music.*]

WAITER

"You'd be surprised." Some snap to it, Sir. [CARLTON *drinks through the straws.*]

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[WAITER *shuffles off to the club-house swaying his shoulders to the tune. As he reaches the steps a jolly-looking man of middle-age, dressed for golf, knee-breeches, rolled stockings, low shoes, flannel shirt, open at the collar, and thin grey sweater, carrying coat on arm and mopping his forehead, comes out of the club-house. He is* REUBEN HALE. *He speaks to the waiter, who says "Yes, sir" and disappears into the club-house.* HALE *goes straight down to* CARLTON *who rises to greet him. They shake hands warmly. During the scene that follows the dance-music occasionally stops, followed by sustained hand-clapping; then the dance is taken up again.*]

HALE

Spafford told me you were out here. How are you?

CARLTON

Fine. You look well.

HALE

Never better.

CARLTON

Dancing?

HALE

Not yet. Just finished eighteen holes of golf. I may have a turn or two presently.

CARLTON

[*Amused and disgusted.*] Ye don't say?

HALE

I'm crazy about it. It keeps us old 'uns young.

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CARLTON

And the young 'uns old.

HALE

Oh, I don't know. A bit of fun is all right. Marian's inside somewhere. Dancing with Arthur likely as not.

CARLTON

Is she?

HALE

What are you doing here?

CARLTON

I've come for Arthur.

HALE

Oh?

CARLTON

His mother wants him for a bit at Bar Harbor.

HALE

I don't think he'll want to go.

CARLTON

He'll go.

HALE

He's been the life and the soul of the season here.

CARLTON

More life than soul from what I hear.

HALE

[*Laughing good-naturedly.*] That's true, too.

[WAITER *brings White Rock with glasses, ice, etc.* HALE *signs check.* WAITER *is again markedly affected by the music and sidles off to it.*]

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HALE

[*Takes a flask from his hip-pocket and pours liquor in glass. Holds up flask to* CARLTON.] Have some?

CARLTON

[*Shakes his head negatively.*] Huh-huh.

HALE

Haven't cut it out, have ye?

CARLTON

No. Just at meals and one or two before I turn in.

HALE

I was going to say. At our time of life. [*Drinks deeply and heartily; gives a breathless, satisfied sigh.*] Ha! I needed that. Any fanatic who would take it away from a man after eighteen holes on a hot day is a public menace. [CARLTON *laughs drily.*] That's what this particular part of the porch is for.

CARLTON

Is it?

HALE

Tea and lemonade on the *front*-porch where they can watch the tennis:—respectability. Flasks and mineral water on the *back*-porch. Damnation. Splendid isolation. *Me!* [*Finishes drink and laughs.*]

CARLTON

No women, eh?

HALE

No women? You wait till the dance is over. *That's* their table. [*Pointing to one on porch.*] And why

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shouldn't they? If they want it? Not a bit of harm. Dance it off, and have some more. Does 'em good.

CARLTON

I've wondered.

HALE

Ye needn't. As nice a bunch of healthy, good-looking girls as you want to see. Full of life and fun. Not an atom of harm in one of 'em.

CARLTON

What a favored spot you've dropped into.

HALE

That's why your boy loves it.

CARLTON

I can quite believe it. Especially the *back-porch.*

HALE

I never saw a young man get more out of life. Bright and jolly all day and every day. And you've come to take him away——?

CARLTON

Yes. And about time.—Eh?

HALE

Oh; I don't know.

CARLTON

Don't you?

HALE

No, I don't. No harm in him.

CARLTON

Not much good either, Reuben.

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HALE

Oh! Get out. What is he? Twenty-four? [CARLTON *nods.*] What's the use of being young if ye don't *act* young? We get old quick enough.

CARLTON

That's about all you can say for Arthur. He's *young. And,* being the *son of a rich man,* there is no harm in anything he does. [*Takes out letter and looks at it.*] Arrested twice in ten days for speeding. Turned out of one of those damned, low-lived, dancing road-houses one night last week, and has made himself a general nuisance to all the decent members of the club ever since he's been here. [*Holds up letter.*] How about it?

HALE

I'm decent, John, and I like him. Who's filled you up with that stuff? [*Pointing to letter.*] Old Crashaw, eh? He don't belong to a man's club. He should join a sewing-bee. . . . I know all about it. The bicycle cop arrests us all. They've got tired fining me. And as for the road-house, someone had been rude to Marian, and Arthur punched him. And I'm damn glad he did. And so ought you be.

CARLTON

[*Looks at him keenly.*] Rude to your daughter, eh?

HALE

Yes. A little party of them drove over to "Mossy Grove." A nice enough place. The right people around

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here go to have a chat and a dance once in a while. And some fellow from New York tried to butt in and Arthur wouldn't stand for it.

CARLTON

You let Marian go to *road*-houses?

HALE

Why not? Where's the harm?

CARLTON

Maybe not. . . . I wouldn't like my girl to go around in that sort of company.

HALE

Rubbish. They all go. Marian loves to dance and she's crazy about Arthur.

CARLTON

Oh? Is that so?

HALE

They're always together.

CARLTON

And you don't mind?

HALE

Mind? I'm just as fond of him as she is.

CARLTON

I see. . . . *I'd* mind, Reuben, if he was *your* son and Marian *my* daughter.

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HALE

[*Laughing heartily.*] Oh, come off, John. . . . Let 'em have a good time amongst themselves. It's better than the young men rotting around cities with the other sort, take it from me. I don't know any boy I like as well as I do Arthur. He's quite one of the family. Beats me at golf in the morning; licks everyone at tennis in the afternoon, with Marian as his partner; and twice a week takes my money at "auction."

CARLTON

[*Grimly.*] *Quite* one of the family. Would you like to have him really *in* it?

HALE

Sure I would. If Marian wanted to.

CARLTON

Reuben! A charming girl like Marian—and—*Arthur!*

HALE

Why not?

CARLTON

She deserves something better than my drunken whelp of a son.

HALE

Here! Here!

CARLTON

What else is he?

HALE

If it comes to that you haven't done much to make him anything else.

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CARLTON

I gave up any hope of doing it long ago. I don't have to take a yard-stick to measure a man. I employ too many. At his age I was responsible for a hundred men and could handle 'em, too. I didn't get to that by golf, tennis, "auction" and dancing either.

HALE

How do you know Arthur couldn't? Why didn't you give him a push-off if you wanted him to follow you?

CARLTON

Because I knew he wasn't worth it.

HALE

Oh, come. . . .

CARLTON

He was kicked out of two schools. Spent a drunken year at college and I was asked to take him away. Now he's a parasitic loafer living on me and his mother. [*With an ejaculation of disgust.*] What's the use of wasting thought on him?

HALE

You just shirk the job, eh?

CARLTON

No. I chucked it. . . . Let him do as he likes.

HALE

Why not cut off supplies and make him work? That's what I'd have done instead of throwing my hands up and putting the blame on him.

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CARLTON

No, Reuben, you wouldn't. . . . Not *Arthur*. There are too many in the penitentiaries as it is. That's where he'd have finished up if I left him to shift for himself. . . . He can have all the money he wants. . . . It isn't that. He has no character, Reuben. . . . Pretty tough for *me* to have to say it. . . . I wouldn't have if you hadn't told me your girl liked him. . . . Keep her away from Arthur's kind. . . . I like Marian.

HALE

And I like Arthur. In spite of his faults. . . . Marian knows them as well as I do. He's a clean, manly boy. Straight as a string. Drinks a bit too much once in awhile. What of it? Who doesn't? Especially now that we are told we mustn't. . . . I hate to hear you talk about him that way, John.

CARLTON

Not more than I do to have to, Reuben.

HALE

Going to take him away? . . . *Now?*

CARLTON

Yes. Tonight. They've been writing this sort of letter to his mother—it isn't the only one—and she's worried. She'd like him with her for a bit.

HALE

Wow! . . . That's tough. The tennis-tournament next week. He and Marian are sure to win the doubles. Golf handicap the following Thursday. And a mas-

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querade when the prizes'll be given. . . . Too bad. . . . Marian'll be upset too. . . . She's really fond of him, John.

CARLTON

Think she wants to marry him?

HALE

I wouldn't be surprised. . . . We've never talked about it.

CARLTON

And you'd let her?

HALE

Sure I would. All I care about is to see her happy and if Arthur's the one to do it I'm satisfied.

CARLTON

You never had much sense, Reuben.

HALE

[*Laughs good-humouredly.*] I've had enough to enjoy every minute of my life. So's my girl.

CARLTON

Wake up. Get her out of the drinking, jazzing set. She's worth better than that.

HALE

[*Laughing.*] There's no harm in it. Young people will have their fun all the world over. It happens to be the kind they like this generation. It will pass and something else will take its place. Worse, maybe. . . . It's always the way with restrictions. Ye don't form character by "Don'ts"! I've never believed in them.

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Make blue-laws and it's fun to break 'em. . . . After a bit the novelty will wear off. It'll be exciting no longer. The zest will have gone. . . . That's all our young people are doing. Having a good time. By and bye it won't seem so good and maybe they'll sit home around the radiator and knit, and talk about us, same as we are about them. . . . Not a bit of harm in any of 'em as far as I can see.

CARLTON

You're very cheery about it. You don't have to handle thousands of working-men growing more and more discontented every day just because of the very things Arthur and his kind are doing. They don't see why they should do without something they've had all their lives while my son can get all he wants. And you say "no harm"!

HALE

None at all. As long as they do it in their homes and their clubs.

CARLTON

Is that so?

HALE

Where's the harm?

CARLTON

The man that keeps the golf-course in shape sees them—on the back-porch. The caddies see 'em. And they go back to their wretched little homes and spread it. It's eating in like a cancer. . . . Everywhere. . . . I *know* because lots of 'em work for me. . . . And a

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pretty sullen lot the workmen of today are becoming because of the *Arthurs*. And you say "No harm at all."

[*The dance-music rises to a wild pitch aided by the scream of the laughing-horn and the beating of tom-toms. Thru and above the noise the merry laughter of the dancers floats out happily thru the windows.* CARLTON *has to stop for a moment, the crash is so insistent. He gives an ejaculation of fervent disgust. When the music quiets down he goes on vehemently.*]

Listen to that damned senseless, barbaric discord. The kind of sound you'd expect Indians or negroes to beat out when they're frenzied with rum. . . . Listen! You can hear their brains rattling in their skulls. God! It's become like a national anthem! Whenever a band strikes up a jazz I feel like standing up and taking my hat off. It is our national anthem!

[*The music stopped a few seconds before he finished speaking. There is a good deal of chatter and laughter as two young men and two young girls come out of the club-house, very hot, very happy. They are mopping perspiring brows panting with healthy exhaustion and humming the jazz music that disturbs* CARLTON *so greatly. They group around a table amidst much scratching of wooden chairs on the wooden porch. The young men* (JIM PICKET *and* NED SCOOFY) *produce flasks from their pockets.* WAITER *brings glasses, water, and mineral waters.* NED *signs check, and* WAITER *takes it into the club-house. As they mix drinks the young*

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people chatter vigorously. The two older men stop talking and listen.]

ETTA

What a stunning band!

JIM

Arthur brought it from "Mossy-Grove."

MAUD-ETHEL

That accounts for the number of encores.

NED

The leader took his signal from Arthur.

ETTA

As long as *Marian* could keep going *we* had to.

JIM

I didn't mind. Did *you?*

MAUD-ETHEL

It was too heavenly.

NED

Think I've improved?

ETTA

Not so's you could notice it.

NED

I take lessons twice a week in the winter.

ETTA

And practice on me in the summer? Thanks. [*Takes glass from* JIM.]

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NED

I always expect a hand on my shoulder in the middle of the floor and a voice saying: "Here! Stop that struggle!"

MAUD-ETHEL

Don't be discouraged, Ned. It will come to you quite suddenly. It did me. I was an awful lemon last year. Remember? Thanks. [*Takes glass from him.*]

[*Silence as they all drink earnestly with glowing satisfaction.*]

JIM

[*Resting a moment between gulps.*] Give me a Jazz-thirst! Ha!

NED

Good stuff.

JIM

Fine.

ETTA

Great.

MAUD-ETHEL

Not so bad.

NED

How much?

JIM

A hundred and fifty.

NED

Good enough. Got some "five-star" last week. *Right off the boat!*

JIM

[*Holding up his glass.*] This is the stuff to drink out of doors. I think the country's a great place. A bath in the cold, salt water—and then a cocktail. A long

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tramp over a wind-blown golf-course and *what* a joy is a "high-ball." A hot set of tennis and a cool gin-and-seltzer. Then at night you jazz and drink and drink and jazz and sleep?—Why ye sleep like a top. Great place the country. [*Drinks.*] How are you off for gin, NED?

NED

Oh, that's easy. I make my own.

ETTA

Do you?

MAUD-ETHEL

Thanks for timely warning.

NED

Couldn't tell the difference. Come in on your way home and I'll mix you the nicest little home-brew you've ever tasted.

MAUD-ETHEL

No amateur stuff for me.

NED

Nix on the "amateur stuff." You couldn't tell it from "Gordon." Honest you couldn't. After a swim the other morning we were all a bit chilly so into the car, up to the Villa and out with the old shaker. I had three before lunch and felt great. Arthur punished *five*. He's crazy about it. He got the prescription from me and starts making it tomorrow.

CARLTON

[*To* HALE.] Not if I know it.

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JIM

My chauffeur makes the finest *beer*. Really fine. . . . I gave him the house to himself one night for a little party and next morning I counted twenty-eight "empties" by the cold, grey light. *Twenty-eight!*

MAUD-ETHEL

I hate beer. Do you like beer? [*To* ETTA.]

ETTA

Not when I can get this. [*Finishing her drink.*]

JIM

He keeps us all in beer. A week ahead always.

NED

Some chauffeur.

JIM

He drives for me as an amusement, I think. To prove an alibi. I bet he makes enough on the side to buy a "Rolls-Royce." When I see a "traveling" look in his eye I raise his wages.

ETTA

Arthur needs a chauffeur. [*They all laugh.*]

MAUD-ETHEL

Next time Arthur's "pinched" they'll put him in jail.

ETTA

Where *can* they be?

JIM

I thought they were following us.

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NED

They *said* they were.

ETTA

Is he going to dance with Marian all the afternoon?

NED

Guess so.

MAUD-ETHEL

Perhaps she wouldn't let him join us. [*Holding up glass.*] *This!*

JIM

[*Laughs.*] Not a chance.

NED

I should say not.

JIM

Arthur's a natural-born, free-for-all, two-handed drinker.

[CARLTON *looks at* HALE. HALE *laughs.*]

NED

Marian'd have a fine time making him "dry."

ETTA

I don't know. If he really loves her.

MAUD-ETHEL

He loves her all right. Poor Arthur.

ETTA

Might be the best thing for him. He needs a strong hand on his drinking-arm.

[*Pantomimes restraining someone from drinking.*]

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JIM

Arthur would as soon quit breathing as drinking.

ETTA

Rather.

MAUD-ETHEL

Oh, I don't know. He might. For a month or two. If she'd marry him.

ETTA

He had a *proposing* look in his eye when he whirled past us just now.

MAUD-ETHEL

Perhaps she's lured him to the lemonade-porch.

ETTA

I love the idea. Sacred and profane drinking-porches. I wonder if he's proposed on the sacred porch?

MAUD-ETHEL

And she's saying, "Yes, if you'll sip through two straws for the rest of your days."

[*All laugh.*]

ETTA

Marian doesn't know she's alive. Hasn't had a drink in her life.

MAUD-ETHEL

She hasn't had a drink but you mustn't say she isn't alive.

JIM

No, indeed. Marian seems to go at top speed without gasoline.

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ETTA

Still she'd be all the brighter for a "spot" now and again.

MAUD-ETHEL

I'd hate to see her take it. She's so full of pep without it.

CARLTON

[*Rising and crossing to club-house steps.*] Let's see if they're there.

HALE

Right you are. We may be in at the death of a lemonade. [*Walking with him.*]

CARLTON

Or Arthur. Those his pals?

HALE

Some of 'em.

CARLTON

They *would* be.

HALE

No harm in 'em.

CARLTON

According to you there's no harm in anything. [*Glares at the young people.*]

HALE

[*Cheerily—smiling at them as they look up, nudge each other and indicate the two parents.*] Hello! Enjoying yourselves?

JIM

Resting between rounds.

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NED

And refreshing.

JIM

Join us?

NED

Come on, Skipper.

HALE

Had mine. But I'll remember it. Ask me later.

MAUD-ETHEL

Don't forget our dance.

ETTA

And ours.

HALE

[*Heartily.*] I won't. I'll be around to claim 'em.

ETTA

Don't forget.

HALE

Right you are.

[HALE *and* CARLTON *go into the club-house.*]

ETTA

He's a dear.

MAUD-ETHEL

Sweet.

ETTA

Does everything Marian does. Refuses her nothing. He's something like a father.

JIM

Who's his friend?

NED

Didn't think much of him. Did you see the parting look?

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ETTA

Just like my *Dad.* Everything I do is wrong. Poor old dumb-bell.

JIM

Let us have a quick one before the next dance. [*Mixes drink.*] I had the shock of my life bringing this down. I got out of the taxi at Grand Central station, see? and gave the grip to the porter. Just as we got inside I saw a fellow looking at the bag curiously and following the porter. I made up my mind if he started to examine it I'd go straight through the gate, deny I owned it or ever saw the porter.

ETTA

How thrilling. What happened? [*Taking her glass and sipping it.*]

JIM

Well, you see I had to think pretty fast.

NED

Some effort.

JIM

The porter went through and the fellow followed. Just nodded to the man at the gate. Never showed a ticket or anything. I felt "goose-fleshy" all over, see?

NED

Sure.

JIM

A dozen at one hundred and fifty dollars rattling in the bag and the sleuth following, see? We got to the train. The porter stopped to ask me the number of my

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seat. I didn't take the slightest notice of him. Just walked on ahead. Got on the platform of the car and looked back as though waiting for someone. Porter came up, "Leave it there," I murmured, without looking at him, indicating the train-platform outside the parlor-car. Slipped some change into his hand just in time. Up came the sleuth. I went in and took my seat. He followed. Sat just across from me.

NED

The dirty dog.

ETTA

What did you do?

MAUD-ETHEL

He's making it up.

JIM

I just sat and sat. Never even looked at him. Just felt he was there. When we got near Northchester I sauntered out on the platform.

NED

Sauntered! Fine.

ETTA

Shut up, Ned.

JIM

I stood near the bag without moving or touching it.

NED

A trying moment. You've got *me,* Jim.

JIM

When the train stopped I got down on the platform.

NED

Without the "grip"!!!!???

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JIM

Of course! The sleuth had followed and was standing in the doorway.

ETTA

I can't bear it.

JIM

There I stood.

NED

And *he* stood.

MAUD-ETHEL

They both stood.

ETTA

And the liquor stood. It's *too* thrilling!

JIM

The signal was given. The train began to move. I jumped on the platform, grabbed the grip——

NED

He grabbed the grip.

JIM

Jumped off and stood panting, the precious bag grasped firmly in my fingers.

NED

And the sleuth?

JIM

Walked back into the car as the train disappeared.

ETTA

[*Exhausted.*] What nerve.

MAUD-ETHEL

Heroic.

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NED

Nerve? I *should say* so. To ever tell it. Say, give the *end* at the *beginning,* if you ever have the cheek to repeat it.

JIM

Well, you *knew* the end. Ain't you drinking it?

[*The band starts again. They all jump up and amid much scratching of chairs, powdering of faces, and laughing chatter they go to the club-house steps.* ARTHUR *and* MARIAN *appear from the club-house.*]

[MARIAN HALE *is a buoyant, breezy, fascinating, spoilt young lady without a care for today or a thought of the morrow. Born to delight others she finds supreme pleasure in doing it. Withal there is a look in her frank, steady eyes that suggests depths that have not, so far, been sounded.*]

[ARTHUR CARLTON, *slim, tense, athletic, carries his twenty-four years with an air. He has great personal magnetism and charm. Happy, fearless, quixotic to a fault. While the merry, laughing eyes attract the unthinking to the more exacting judge of character the lower part of the face is sadly disappointing. It betrays irresolution, over-indulgence and considerable latent brutality. Self-willed, uncontrollable, potentially supremely selfish. The balance-wheel of discipline is noticeably wanting.*]

[*No two people could be more opposite than* ARTHUR *and* MARIAN. *In that lies the impelling attraction each has for the other.*]

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ETTA

Why, Marian, where have you been?

JIM

I've some left. [*Holding up flask to* ARTHUR.]

ARTHUR

Thanks. I've just had some *tea.*

[*Laughs. The two young men both laugh. Nudge* ARTHUR, *indicating* MARIAN.]

NED

May I have this dance?

MARIAN

No, Ned.

NED

All right. Keep me one.

ETTA

Hold our table down.

JIM

Order a gallon of "White Rock."

NED

We'll have a million-dollar thirst after this dance.

MAUD-ETHEL

Oh, you spoonies!

[*They all go into the club-house laughing and chatting.*]

ARTHUR

You don't want to dance?

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MARIAN

No. Unless you do?

ARTHUR

I don't. . . . Do sit down.

MARIAN

In sound of the music? [*Jazzing to music.*]

ARTHUR

Yes.

MARIAN

Right.
[*Sits.*]
There.

ARTHUR

It's very good of you. [*Looks affectionately at her.*]

MARIAN

What is?

ARTHUR

Letting me see so much of you.

MARIAN

I *like* seeing you.

ARTHUR

Do you?

MARIAN

Yes.

ARTHUR

Really?

MARIAN

If I didn't, you can be sure of one thing—I *wouldn't.*

ARTHUR

No; I suppose not.

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MARIAN

Oh, you may be sure of it.

ARTHUR

I felt rather guilty—as though I were poaching—*at first.*

MARIAN

Why?

ARTHUR

I thought you liked Tom Carrol—*at first.*

MARIAN

I did.

ARTHUR

I thought so.

MARIAN

And I do.

ARTHUR

Oh? Do you?

MARIAN

And I always will. . . . But I like you better.

ARTHUR

Isn't that fine. . . . I *hoped* you did. . . . *Much* better?

MARIAN

Quite a good deal.

ARTHUR

Enough to some day—marry me?

MARIAN

Almost enough for that—some day.

ARTHUR

Oh, Marian.

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MARIAN

Almost!

ARTHUR

[*Discouraged.*] But not *quite*?

MARIAN

I might—*quite*—if——

ARTHUR

If what? [*Eagerly; despondently.*]

MARIAN

By-and-bye.

ARTHUR

No. Tell me now.

MARIAN

Not just now, Arthur.

ARTHUR

All right. . . . I hate "If's". . . . You *will* tell me?

MARIAN

Oh, yes. I'll tell you.

ARTHUR

Fancy you liking me as much as that! . . . Why?

MARIAN

[*Looking shyly at him.*] You're such good fun. It's jolly being with you.

ARTHUR

[*His eyes dancing.*] Is it?

MARIAN

Jolly.

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ARTHUR

That's the way I feel about you. I feel I want to have you around always. . . . Feel that way about me?

MARIAN

Yes.

ARTHUR

All the time?

MARIAN

Most of the time. You're a wonderful partner at tennis. You dance better than anyone I know and sit a horse like a soldier. . . . And you're nice to Dad.

ARTHUR

I'm crazy about him.

MARIAN

You're always light-hearted and irresponsible. Willing to get down on all-fours and play games with anyone. You're a perfect companion, Arthur.

ARTHUR

You don't know how conceited you make me.

MARIAN

That's another thing I like you for.

ARTHUR

Conceit?

MARIAN

Because you're *not.*

ARTHUR

I never had any cause to be, until now. But if I were to say "Marian, will you be my wife?" and you said "Yes, Arthur, I will" I'd feel ten feet taller and a heap bigger.

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MARIAN

Say it.

ARTHUR

Marian, will you be my wife?

MARIAN

Yes, Arthur, I will.

ARTHUR

[*Rising to his toes and expanding his chest.*] Oh! I feel great! If we weren't out here I'd embrace you.

[ARTHUR *makes a movement to embrace her when the* WAITER *enters, crosses over to table, clears away glasses* CARLTON *and* HALE *used, and carries them into club-house.* ARTHUR *whips out a flask from his hip-pocket, picks up one of the clean glasses, pours some liquor into it and mineral-water, holds up the glass.*]

ARTHUR

To the union of Arthur and Marian. May they be as jolly companions *married* as they are *single.* [*Drinks.*]

MARIAN

Now I'm going to tell you the "If." [*He pauses, lowers the glass and looks at her.*] You must make me one promise. Only one. [*Points to glass.*] *That.* . . . It won't do, Arthur.

ARTHUR

I'll stop it altogether, if you say so. Say, "Arthur, I want you never to drink again" and *I'll* say "Marian! I'll throw this glass away and never, never, never drink any more. So help me!" Say it! . . . Come!

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MARIAN

I don't want you to make any such promise. To be either a hard-drinker or a total-abstainer shows lack of character. To take it occasionally is perfectly all right. Perfectly. It makes you happy, jolly, agreeable. But when you take *more* than you should you seem to be a different Arthur from the one I love. . . . And you've been doing it pretty often of late.

ARTHUR

I know. . . . You're quite right. . . . Disgusting of me. . . . That's the *last.* [*Throws remainder of liquor out of glass.*] Until we're married.

MARIAN

Oh! Then you'll *really* begin?

ARTHUR

No. No. Of course not. . . . Just at the wedding? Eh?

MARIAN

I don't want you to stop. Take it as my father does. He enjoys it but never takes so much that he makes himself a nuisance.

ARTHUR

And *I* have?

MARIAN

Yes. You *have.* And it's hurt me and made me ashamed. The other night at that Inn I felt I never wanted to go out with you again. I was miserable. . . . But in the morning I forgave you. You *were* plucky and the only one who defended me. . . . But it was

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brutal the way you attacked that man. It wasn't *you*. It was some terrible, murderous potentiality in you. [*Shivers.*] It wasn't *you*.

ARTHUR

[*Gloomily.*] I know. I *was VERY*—— [*Breaks off.*]

MARIAN

Why can't you take a little and stop?

ARTHUR

I don't know. I began too young, I suppose. We all drank at college. [*Laughs boyishly.*] The great game was to take enough to make your head go round one way, then go to an amusement park and get on a merry-go-round going the other. Straighten it out. It seemed the manly thing to do. And no one interfered. They seemed to expect it of us. Until they wrote home to take me away.

MARIAN

Didn't your father interfere?

ARTHUR

[*Disdainfully.*] Father! He'd like me to drink myself to death. Then he'd be rid of me.

MARIAN

[*Shocked.*] Arthur!

ARTHUR

It's so. He despises me. Always has.

MARIAN

Why?

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ARTHUR

I didn't come up to his expectations.

MARIAN

That's no reason for despising you.

ARTHUR

Well, I do him. So it's a stand-off. He thinks only of his business. Never known him to enjoy himself like your father does. When I didn't string along and be enthusiastic about adding up figures in the office and refused to learn how to handle basic pig-iron he just dropped me. Cut me out. Why, there have been times at home when he hasn't spoken a dozen words to me in a month. And they were so bitter they sizzled on his tongue.

MARIAN

Didn't he bring you up to do anything?

ARTHUR

No. When I showed no interest in "basic-pig" he lost all interest in me.

MARIAN

And you didn't make yourself interested in anything?

ARTHUR

Not much. You see, Marian, I haven't any brain really.

MARIAN

You've just amused yourself and been contented with that?

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ARTHUR

[*Sullenly.*] I guess that about lets me out. What can I do? I hate Law. Medicine makes me sick. Politics too messy. I'd hate being inquired into. And *business* is just an unnecessary drudge. What's there to do? America's too small for a young man. I want to travel. See other countries. We're too cramped here. Our lives are so little. So—nothing. . . . [*Suddenly.*] Let us marry and go all over the world.

MARIAN

Can we?

ARTHUR

Your father wouldn't mind.

MARIAN

Would yours?

ARTHUR

I wouldn't ask him. I'd just go. I can get all I want from my mother and I have a bit of my own from a grandmother. Come on. Let's.

MARIAN

It would be exciting.

ARTHUR

There's an awful lot to see. We could stay away years.

MARIAN

Oh, no. Not years.

ARTHUR

Well—a year. One year. Get away from all this half-living. Getting arrested is an event! . . . Punching a sucker's head the last word in excitement. We *are*

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a cheap, provincial lot. . . . Let's go away to the older countries and learn how to live.

MARIAN

I'll talk it over at home.

ARTHUR

[*Urgently.*] They'll let you do anything you want.

MARIAN

Still it's nice to talk it over at home just the same.

ARTHUR

I may find something *big* I can do. *Very* big.

MARIAN

[*Smiling.*] *Enormous!* [*Moves body, head and fingers to the jazz-music.*]

ARTHUR

How small we must seem to other countries!

MARIAN

I wonder if we do?

ARTHUR

Look at all the men like my father. Grubbing all their lives. Grinding. Piling up money.

MARIAN

You have the fun of spending it.

ARTHUR

We can do all kinds of things, you and I. Become real powers. You can buy anything with money abroad.

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MARIAN

But we'll come back?

ARTHUR

Oh, I suppose so. Some time. If we can stand it and you really wanted to.

MARIAN

I would want to. You see—I *like* our country. And I think it very vast. I don't know how we seem to foreigners, but I can't help feeling they don't think us so very insignificant; that they're a little bit afraid of us and they like us on their side in time of trouble. . . . I think the farther you get away from the United States the more you'll realize how really *big* we are.

ARTHUR

Oh, yes. Acres of dirt. I mean the *people.*

MARIAN

So do I. *This* doesn't represent America, Arthur. You don't know your own country. *I* don't. But I *want* to know it. See it. Feel its power. Because—I love it.

ARTHUR

Oh, as to that, we all do. But you can't close your eyes to our provincialism.

MARIAN

Then let's open our *minds* to all that *isn't* provincial. It's the only country I know. The only country I'm fond of. I want to know it *fully, completely.* . . . It *would* be fun seeing the *others* first. "Who knows America that only America knows?"

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ARTHUR

We'll begin with Paris.

MARIAN

You *are* provincial. [*Laughs.*] Just the same sort of thing all over again. Games, jazz, drinking—not with French people either, Arthur, but with our own kind. [*Reproachfully.*] *Arthur!* [*Laughs.*]

ARTHUR

Well, anywhere you like. I'll give you a map of the world and you stick in little flags wherever you want to go.

MARIAN

That would be wonderful. [*Seeing that he is dejected about Paris.*] We *might* begin with Paris.

ARTHUR

[*Brightening; trying not to be too enthusiastic.*] Just as you like.

MARIAN

And then all through France among the peasants.

ARTHUR

[*Dejected again.*] Anywhere! Anywhere at all! So long as you are with me. It's wonderful of you to promise to marry me. . . . I love you, Marian.

MARIAN

And I love you, Arthur.

ARTHUR

I'll do everything I can to make a "GO" of it.

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MARIAN

So will I.

ARTHUR

And as to *this*—— [*Touching glass.*] I promise you, across my heart, nothing until after we're married. And after that just what you think is right.

[TOM CARROL, *a young, handsome, determined-looking man of twenty-eight, comes out from the club-house. He is in a traveling-suit and just off the train.* MARIAN *greets him warmly although she is a little embarrassed.* ARTHUR *rather shyly and distantly.*]

MARIAN

[*Shaking his hand.*] We thought you'd forgotten us.

ARTHUR

Hello, Tom. [*Shakes his hand then looks away.*]

TOM

I've been tied up in town. Weeks of it. In all the heat. I'm only down now for the week-end. But I've got what I've been trying for so long. I've convinced them at last I'm indispensable. . . . Marian! They've taken me into the firm. Isn't that fine, Arthur? I'm to be their representative abroad.

ARTHUR

Abroad?

MARIAN

I'm so glad.

TOM

I start in a few weeks. London, Paris, Rome, Ma-

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drid, Egypt, India. All the places I've always wanted to go to. Isn't it lucky?

MARIAN

Very.

ARTHUR

I should say so.

TOM

So I—— [*Turning to* ARTHUR.] Do you mind if I have a few moments alone with Marian? . . . Or am I interrupting?

ARTHUR

[*Half-angrily.*] Well, as a matter of fact——

MARIAN

Not at all, Tom. [ARTHUR *looks savagely at* MARIAN.] Of course we *were* going in to dance.

TOM

There'll be many more. Let me have just this *one*. Here. Will you?

MARIAN

Why of course. But——

TOM

Please do.

ARTHUR

[*Angrily.*] Wouldn't another time——?

TOM

Just a few minutes. If you don't mind very much.

ARTHUR

[*Looks again at* MARIAN *who makes signs for him to*

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go.] Oh! All right. I'll be just inside. Mind—only a few minutes.

TOM

That's all. I'll call you.

[ARTHUR *glares savagely at* TOM'S *innocent back and goes into the club-house.*]

TOM

It is nice seeing you again. Like this. I've missed you so much this summer. So much. But it's been worth it. Because it's made it possible for me to do something that was out of the question last year. . . . [*Hesitates.*] I'm not very good at *saying* things—when I *feel* a great deal. . . . I *do* now. Can you guess?

MARIAN

[*In distress.*] Oh, Tom! Tom!

TOM

This turn of luck has changed everything for me. Everything. I don't have to struggle any more. Things have been made easy. And so—Marian—at last I can —I want you to——

MARIAN

Don't, Tom. Don't.

TOM

Why?

MARIAN

I have just promised Arthur I'll marry him.

TOM

[*Aghast, sits back in chair.*] Arthur!

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MARIAN

Yes.

TOM

[*Under his breath.*] My God! [*He goes perfectly limp.*] Arthur! God!

MARIAN

Don't take it like that, Tom.

TOM

I never thought. . . . It seemed—you cared for me—a few months ago.

MARIAN

I did. Very, very much. I do now. I always will care for you, Tom. But not in the same way I care for Arthur. He seems to need me. You are so self-contained. Your life is in your hands. You know what to do with it. Arthur—seems to need me. . . . I am so sorry for you, Tom.

TOM

If I'd asked you six months ago—would you have——?

MARIAN

Yes—I would.

TOM

What a fool! What a hesitating, doubting fool I've been!

MARIAN

You mustn't feel that way, Tom. Now that I know how much I love Arthur I know what I felt for you was not *quite* the same. . . . Not the same *kind* of love. . . . And it would have been dreadful for us both if I found out *afterward* I loved him more than I did you. Wouldn't it?

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TOM

[*Clenching his hands and beating them together.*] What a fool! . . . *Arthur!*

MARIAN

You see we like the same things. Games, dancing, amusing people around us. Jokes about everything. Care free. Irresponsible.

TOM

But *we* liked fun together, games, dancing. The same things, Marian.

MARIAN

[*In distress.*] I know. I'm just trying to excuse myself. Oh, I'm so sorry you ever liked me. That I *let* you like me. . . . And I *did.* I *know* I did. It makes me feel so cruel. . . . But we can't help being cruel when we love, can we, Tom?

TOM

No, I suppose we can't. Love seems to have no code. We just love and that's all there is to it. And I'll always love you. Always. I feel rather stunned. I came here so full of my news. Able at last to ask you. I thought you mightn't accept me—just at first. But I'd have waited—I'd have waited. . . . Now all that's gone. . . . *Arthur!*

MARIAN

[*Starts at his contemptuous tone, looks curiously at him.*] Don't you like him?

TOM

You're going to marry him. That's enough. What does it matter whether I——? Shall I call him back?

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MARIAN

Do let us be pals as we used to be. . . . You'll hurt me if you don't. . . . Because I like you, Tom, very, very much. . . . Let's be pals. . . . Will you?

TOM

All right, Marian.

MARIAN

And don't think too badly of Arthur. . . . He's really splendid. . . . And he loves me. . . . Don't think badly of him. Will you?

TOM

I won't, Marian.

ARTHUR

[*Hurries down the steps and goes to them.*] My father's here.

MARIAN

Oh?

ARTHUR

He saw me. He's with *your* father. They're coming here.

MARIAN

I'm so glad. Arthur—I've told Tom. . . . And he congratulates us both. Don't you?

TOM

Yes. Of course.

ARTHUR

Thanks, Tom.

TOM

I hope you'll both be——

[CARLTON *followed by* HALE *comes quickly down the steps.* TOM *takes advantage of the interruption to go into the club-house.*]

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CARLTON

[*To* ARTHUR.] I've been looking for you everywhere.

ARTHUR

You can't have looked very hard.

MARIAN

How do you do, Mr. Carlton.

CARLTON

[*Shaking hands very quickly with her.*] How do you do, Miss Hale.

HALE

Dance this with your father?

MARIAN

I want to talk to Mr. Carlton.

CARLTON

He wants to talk to *Arthur.* Come on. Don't be ashamed of me.

MARIAN

Ashamed? Why, you're the best dancer in the room.

HALE

Ha! [*Laughs.*]

MARIAN

For your age and weight.

HALE

Don't qualify it! Don't qualify it! I'm as young as the next man and [*spanning his waist*] *a perfect*——

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MARIAN

Forty-six.—I'm going to jazz with this young man, Arthur, and then I want to talk with your father. Come on. [*They jazz together toward the club-house, indicating* HALE'S *stomach.*] It's like dancing with someone who's in Europe.

HALE

Here, Marian! [*They sing snatch of "Daddy" as they disappear, dancing into the club-house.*)

CARLTON

[*Looking grimly at his son.*] Well?

ARTHUR

[*Sullenly.*] Well?

CARLTON

You don't seem very glad to see me.

ARTHUR

I'm not.

CARLTON

No. You're *not.*

ARTHUR

I never am, if it comes to that.

CARLTON

I guess that's about what it comes to. . . . You've been making a fine exhibition of yourself.

ARTHUR

Have I?

CARLTON

What do *you* call it?

ARTHUR

I don't call it anything. I leave that to you—!

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CARLTON

Well, I call it pretty damn disgraceful. Fined twice. Driving around drunk.

ARTHUR

[*Hotly.*] I wasn't.

CARLTON

Thrown out of a dancing-dive—*drunk!*

ARTHUR

That's a lie.

CARLTON

Here. Cut that out.

ARTHUR

I wasn't drunk any of those times.

CARLTON

You must have been damn near it then.

ARTHUR

Who told you?

CARLTON

Your mother.

ARTHUR

Who told her?

CARLTON

Some of your club friends. . . . You know they're about "fed-up" with you.

ARTHUR

Who are "fed-up" with me?

CARLTON

The decent people around here.

ARTHUR

They haven't told me so.

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CARLTON

They shouldn't need to. . . . You shouldn't have to be thrown out everywhere. College. Road-house. Now a club.

ARTHUR

I don't believe it.

CARLTON

See here, you've said that once before. Say it again and I'll twist yer neck, ye young hound. . . . *I tell you it is so!* . . . I don't care what they do to you. Your mother *does*. More fool she. . . . She wants you home. And I've come to fetch you.

ARTHUR

[*Aghast.*] Home!

CARLTON

[*Takes out watch.*] There's a train in—let me see—5.15—[*Fingers on dial tracing figures*] in fifty minutes. So you have time for a jazz, a few more drinks, then change into something you can travel in. . . . I'll wait here.

ARTHUR

I can't go.

CARLTON

Oh, yes, you can. And what's more—you're *going*.

ARTHUR

[*Distractedly.*] I tell you I can't. . . . Not now . . . I'll come later. . . . Next week—for a day or two—I can't now.

CARLTON

I'm not used to telling people to do the same thing twice. And I'm not going to begin with you.

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ARTHUR

I tell you I *can't*—and what's more I *won't.*

CARLTON

Do you want me to make an example of you before your club friends? Because that's what I'm going to do if you're not very careful. I'll drag you by the collar every foot of the way to the depot, starting from this lawn.

ARTHUR

[*Almost crying with disappointment and rage.*] I can't go away now.

CARLTON

You're going home and you're not coming back here again. You've disgraced us enough. . . . Don't you look at me like that—why I—— [*Suddenly takes him by the wrist and turns it.*]

ARTHUR

[*Screaming with pain.*] Don't. By God I'll kill you. Don't. [*Struggles fiercely—sinks down on one knee.*] Oh! . . . *Don't!*

[CARLTON *suddenly releases him, throws him away from him.* ARTHUR *springs up on the defensive wringing his injured wrist.*]

CARLTON

[*Sneering and smiling malignantly.*] Golf and tennis-muscles, eh? *Pap!* That's what they are. Pap. Mine were moulded in a foundry. As a *laborer.* . . . Don't forget that when you're dashing around in a ten-

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thousand-dollar car—drunk. You're the son of a *laborer.* Keep it in mind. You *loafer!*

[*The music has stopped. Chatter of voices is heard and figures can be seen moving near the club-house windows.*]

ARTHUR

[*Excitedly; eagerly; chattering with wounded vanity.*] Don't say anything before them. I'll change. [*Indicating his clothes.*]

CARLTON

If you're not back here in twenty minutes I'll fetch you.

ARTHUR

All right. I'll—I'll——

[*Runs full tilt into the side entrance to the club-house.* HALE *and* MARIAN *come through the center windows. They are both laughing happily. She is on his arm. As they come down the steps they see* CARLTON. HALE *instantly takes* MARIAN *in his arms and they jazz over to the angry and disgusted parent.*]

MARIAN

[*Disengaging herself, breathlessly.*] Where's Arthur?

CARLTON

Gone in to change.

MARIAN

Change what?

CARLTON

Only his clothes.

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MARIAN

Why?

CARLTON

We're going in by the 5.15.

MARIAN

In?

CARLTON

Home. Bar Harbor.

MARIAN

Oh!

CARLTON

His mother wants him.

MARIAN

Is she ill?

CARLTON

Worrying.

MARIAN

What a shame. [*To her father.*] Isn't it?

HALE

Tell him your news. Go on. [*To* CARLTON.] Got a little surprise for you, unless Arthur's told you already.

MARIAN

Has he?

CARLTON

What?

MARIAN

About our engagement?

CARLTON

No. He didn't tell me.

MARIAN

Well, we *are* engaged.

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CARLTON

That so? [*Grimly.*] Since when?

MARIAN

[*Looking at her wrist watch.*] Since eighteen minutes and twenty-three seconds.

HALE

[*Laughing loudly as he watches* CARLTON'S *face.*] I warned you.

CARLTON

He didn't say a word about it.

HALE

Perhaps you didn't give him a chance.

CARLTON

Now I come to think about it I didn't. [*To* HALE.] Well? What have you to say about it?

HALE

Me? Tickled to death. [*Laughing again.*] You know what I think about Arthur.

CARLTON

I don't fancy your daughter knows what *I* think about him. [*To* MARIAN.] Do you?

MARIAN

No. What *do* you?

CARLTON

If you were *my* daughter I'd rather see you marry the man who sweeps up the tennis-court than Arthur.

MARIAN

But I'm not your daughter, Mr. Carlton, and I love Arthur and I'm going to marry *him.*

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CARLTON

Well, you've got courage anyway. And you seem to know your own mind too.

MARIAN

I do.

CARLTON

You'll need *both* when you get Arthur on your hands. I've had him for twenty-four years. So I know.

MARIAN

It seems to have sat pretty lightly on you—for twenty-four years.

CARLTON

Oh, no, it hasn't. You don't suppose I take any pride in a son like Arthur?

MARIAN

It might have been better for you both if you *had*, Mr. Carlton.

CARLTON

See here, my girl. I like you too well to see you throw yourself away on my drunken good-for-nothing. Don't do it.

MARIAN

After all, Mr. Carlton, if he *is*, which I don't admit, a good-for-nothing, whose fault is it? You've had the shaping and making of him for twenty-four years. You may be a splendid man of affairs. You must be. But you might have given some of the intelligence you've used in building up your business to building up your son's character.

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CARLTON

He hasn't any to build.

MARIAN

Well, I differ about that. . . . If, after we marry, you can still call him a drunken-good-for-nothing blame it on me. Up to now, whatever your son's weaknesses may be, the blame is mostly yours.

CARLTON

All right. Mine if you like.

MARIAN

You know responsibility doesn't end with paying one's son's way through school, college and afterwards. That *makes* for good-for-nothings. If you let a boy see you have no pride or faith in him, then sooner or later he'll justify your *want* of faith. You're going to change your opinion of Arthur, Mr. Carlton.

CARLTON

That sounds fine. Fine. . . . Now I want to tell you what you're up against so that you go into the bargain with your eyes open.

MARIAN

You don't have to tell me he was sent down from college for drunkenness. I know it. *He* told me. But you may be interested to know that from today he has promised me to never drink too much again.

CARLTON

Fine! Fine!

MARIAN

Did he ever promise *you* that?

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CARLTON

About once a month. Oftener if he was in debt.

MARIAN

He'll keep the promise he's made me.

CARLTON

Maybe you're right. I hope you are. If you cure him you'll be the first. I've seen more than you have of men and beasts and there's precious little difference between them when you get down to tin-tacks. If they're just naturally vicious nothing this side of the grave will get it out of them. You can beat 'em and pet 'em and get on their good side and have them all straightened out fine as silk and without a second's warning back they go to their old tricks. Seen it in beasts. Seen it in men. Arthur's one of them. He's naturally vicious.

MARIAN

He's *not*.

CARLTON

Ever seen him ride a horse?

MARIAN

Often.

CARLTON

Ever looked at its mouth when he's done riding it?

MARIAN

No. Why?

CARLTON

Look at it next time. Ever see him with a dog? There isn't a dog at home that will go near him. And the horses come back to the stables sweaty and bloody

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and no good for days. . . . Watch a man with animals if you want to get a line on him. . . . They'd treat human beings the same. . . . Ever see him in one of his tempers?

MARIAN

[*Laughs.*] Often. I love his tempers. They're quick and loud and devastating . . . and *over* in two seconds. They're very picturesque. And he's never so charming as when he's asking to be forgiven after one of them.

CARLTON

Fine. Fine. You've got him right, I can see that.

MARIAN

Why, at tennis, the other day,—remember Father? —the umpire called three balls running, *out*, that were inches *in* and he flared up, swore a mighty swear and threw his racquet right across the court into the bay. Then in a second it was all over. They brought him a new racquet and he ran out the set *and* the match, advanced to shake hands with his opponent, who walked furiously off the court. Arthur muttered "Damn poor sportsman" and we all shrieked.

HALE

The high-light of the afternoon. No harm in it. None at all.

CARLTON

[*Looks at* HALE *grimly.*] No, of course not. [*To* MARIAN.] If *you* happened to be the subject of one of those picturesque, devastating outbursts he'd treat you

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like the racquet and they wouldn't be able to bring him another and go on with the game.

MARIAN

You don't understand him. I do. He's grown physically but not mentally. That's what high-priced schools do for boys when their fathers take no interest in them. They develop their bodies, mostly. He's been traveling with a swift set who mistake noise for having a joyous time. It's only a phase, Mr. Carlton.

HALE

Sure. Not the slightest bit of——

CARLTON

Harm?

MARIAN

Of course not. He adores me and I do him. I'm going to make him all over again into a fine man. You gave in. I'm going to stick. There are too few Arthurs. Too few picturesque, devastating men-children of twenty-four. They are the bright spots in this grey old world.

CARLTON

Oh, they are. No mistake about that. They're the bright-spots all right. I've seen a lot of picturesque, devastating drunkards of twenty-four. Especially when I went to take Arthur away. He was right in the middle of them. Wait till they're forty, if they ever get that far. Not so picturesque maybe, but damned devastated. . . . Anyway you're going into it with your eyes open.

MARIAN

Wide open. Then you have no objection to me?

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CARLTON

I'm a bit *afraid* for you, that's all.

MARIAN

Don't be. I'll save Arthur.

CARLTON

I see. The *maternal* instinct. That's how rotters like Arthur get hold of nice girls like you. The maternal instinct. Nature put the ball-and-chain on you all right when they gave you that. . . . Too bad you didn't pick out a decent, clean fellow instead of a mess you've got to put together.

MARIAN

You're cruel! Cruel! I wouldn't *try* to save *you*. You're so *hard*, so un-charming! Arthur's—Arthur's—— [*Breaks off in anger and tears.*]

CARLTON

Arthur's 24, has his hair and his figure. That's the only difference, my dear.

HALE

Oh, come, come, Marian. Let's all be happy about this.

MARIAN

[*Gasping.*] I—am—happy. But—he—frightens me. . . . It's not natural to hate one's son like that. To say such cruel things.

HALE

[*Soothing her.*] There! There! Come, John, let's all be happy and hopeful about it.

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CARLTON

I'm not so happy *or* hopeful. Marian, now that you blame me for being responsible for Arthur's want of character, what has your father done with making yours?

MARIAN

He's understood me; humoured me; kept a loose-rein on me so that I've never been conscious of it.

CARLTON

[*Slowly and firmly.*] You try to ride Arthur on a *loose rein* and you'll break your neck.

MARIAN

It's terrible to hear you talk of your son like that. You're so cruel. . . . Why can't you let him stay—just for tonight? . . . It's our engagement day. . . . Please don't take him away.

[CARLTON *shakes his head.*]

HALE

Come, be a sport, John.

CARLTON

I'm *not* a sport, Reuben, and he's going.

MARIAN

I know now why Arthur hates you. You've treated him like that ever since he was a child.

CARLTON

I don't care how much he hates me. But his mother doesn't hate me and I won't have her worried for a hundred pups like him.

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HALE

Now, where's the harm?

MARIAN

I shall tell Arthur not to go.

CARLTON

I wouldn't do that if I were you, Marian. He'd want to obey you and he's *got* to me. I've got a temper, too. And he knows it. I'd throw him into the bay just as he did the racquet, if he asked for it.

MARIAN

[*Quietly and distinctly.*] He will not go with you, Mr. Carlton.

CARLTON

He'll be out here dressed to travel with me in less than five minutes. Stay here and see who he'll obey.

MARIAN

Very well, Mr. Carlton, I'll stay.

[*The band has stopped.* MAUD-ETHEL, ETTA, JIM *and* NED *come down the steps and go towards their table, chatting and laughing. The* WAITER *brings fresh glasses and clears away the old ones, has check signed by* NED, *then sees* HALE *beckoning him, crosses over to table where the two men were standing and takes order from* HALE. *Asks* CARLTON *who shakes his head, exits into club-house. Whilst this is being done* ETTA *has called* MARIAN *over to her. They start talking, then walk arm in arm to the club-house steps.* MARIAN *goes into the*

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club-house. ETTA *goes back to her friends.* CARLTON *has sunk heavily into a chair, sat back and lighted a cigar.* HALE *looks at him, laughs, starts to speak, changes his mind, takes out a pipe, lights it, and smokes it with great enjoyment. Then takes out his watch and watches the minutes passing, now and again glancing at* CARLTON *with a humorous twinkle in his eye.*]

MAUD-ETHEL

What's up with Arthur?

ETTA

Don't look now. That's his father over there.

[*The other three turn at once and look at* CARLTON. *He happens to be looking in their direction and scowls at them.* HALE *beams at them. They instantly look away.*]

Stupid. I told you not to!

[*They look at each other meaningly.* JIM *whistles, a low, long plaintive whistle.* NED *imitates* CARLTON'S *scowl and his determined manner of sitting in his chair.* MAUD-ETHEL *shows the whites of her eyes and brings her fingers together as though praying. The two young men mix and pass refreshments during the following.*]

MAUD-ETHEL

Why has Arthur changed? Isn't he going to dance anymore?

ETTA

Don't know. He just asked me, looking as black and

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angry as that old fuss looks over there, to ask Marian quietly, *very* quietly, to go into the club-house and meet him in the little room off the club-office.

JIM

Bet there's been a row.

NED

Have half your bet, if you get any takers.

MAUD-ETHEL

Fathers ought to be barred from clubs.

ETTA

Not *Marian's.*

MAUD-ETHEL

Well, all the others, including *mine.*

JIM

I second that.

NED

Carried.

MAUD-ETHEL

And all *mothers,* barring *none!*

JIM

Object.

NED

Sustained. I vote for the *young* mothers. Some of them are smarter than flappers.

MAUD-ETHEL

Married people should have clubs of their own.

JIM

Where would you get your scandal from? I know

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a good story about a young mother. There was a young mother who had a——

ETTA

Sshh! Not so loud. He's listening.

[*They all look at* CARLTON, *then giggling and whispering, exeunt into the club-house.*]

HALE

What's become of Marian?

CARLTON

Gone in to tell him not to go.

HALE

Think so?

CARLTON

Sure.

HALE

Who'll he obey?

CARLTON

Me.

HALE

Think so?

CARLTON

Sure.

HALE

Why not let them have *this* evening together anyway?

CARLTON

No.

HALE

Just cranky?

CARLTON

That's it.

HALE

It's not *my* way.

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CARLTON

It's mine.

HALE

That's looking for trouble. I dodge it.

CARLTON

He'll have the trouble. He's not going to bluff me.

HALE

Suppose you *do* carry him off. What good'll it do you?

CARLTON

Do what I set out to do. Done it all my life.

HALE

Never think of the other fellow?

CARLTON

Never.

HALE

You'll lose Arthur altogether that way.

CARLTON

I wish to God I could.

HALE

Well, I wouldn't like to lose Marian, no matter *what* happened. We're pals, Marian and I, in spite of our awkward relationship.

CARLTON

You've got a real woman for a child. I've got a—Oh, quit——

HALE

I wish you could look at it same as I do. If there was any kick coming I should be the one to have it.

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CARLTON

I don't care about him being engaged or marrying. It isn't that. [*Pounding table.*] But when it comes to pitting his will against mine one has to give way and it won't be me.

[*The* WAITER *comes from the club-house, hands* HALE *a letter and goes back to the club-house.* HALE *reads the letter; his brows knit; he gives an ejaculation; then he laughs gaily.*]

HALE

John, you won't take him to Bar Harbor tonight. He's gone.

CARLTON

Gone? Where.

HALE

[*Reads letter.*] "Dear Dad, Arthur has obeyed me. By the time you get this we will be speeding fifty miles an hour on a *loose rein* to the State of Connecticut. There we will be married. I will phone you after the ceremony and we will all dine together and you can give us your blessing. We are sorry to do it this way but Mr. Carlton was so unreasonable what else *could* we do? Give him our love. Till tonight, Daddy dear. Your loving, dutiful and obedient daughter,

MARIAN."

[CARLTON *makes an impulsive movement.*]

HALE

You're not going to try and stop 'em? Nothing silly like that, John?

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CARLTON

Stop 'em! Stop 'em! [*Laughs.*]

Why should I? That's for *you* to do if you want to. I've got him off my hands for good. That's the end of my chapter. The next will be at Marian's. Poor Marian.

HALE

Join us at dinner tonight?

CARLTON

No, thank ye. I'll carry the good news to his mother. Good-bye, Reuben.

HALE

Good-bye, John. Cheer up.

CARLTON

Sure I will. I hope you're right, Reuben—that no harm will come of it. [*Goes away quickly.*]

[*The band flares up suddenly into a spirited dance.* HALE *brightens at the delightful discord and smiling contentedly, humming the tune, he leisurely goes into the club-house.*]

THE END OF ACT I

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Act II: NEW YORK

A charmingly furnished "Rest-Room" connected with a private ball-room in a fashionable New York hotel. Through the closed folding-doors can be heard spirited and delightful dance-music mingled with the chatter of happy voices and joyous laughter. Tom Carrol *is moving restlessly and nervously about the room. The sounds seem to distract him. There is evidently no gaiety in his thoughts. In from the passage comes a tall, slender, distinguished-looking young lady of twenty-six. She has the authority of manner and the quality of voice of one accustomed to self-discipline and who has found in a vocation the outlet a woman needs for self-development.* Madeleine Trent *is one of the recent actresses who have endeared themselves to the less jaded of the New York theatre-goers. She greets* Tom *warmly. He brightens at her greeting, and momentarily forgets his brooding thoughts.*

TOM

[*Smiling with genuine pleasure.*] How do you do, Miss Trent? I saw your play tonight.

MADELEINE

Did you? How nice! Like it?

TOM

Very much. And *you*, if I may say so.

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MADELEINE

Oh—do say it. I love to *hear* nice things. One sometimes *reads* such horrid ones.

TOM

Not on you. . . . Surely?

MADELEINE

Why not? There's no serum one can take against them. . . . So Marian and Arthur are off?

TOM

[*Uneasily.*] Yes.

MADELEINE

I'd like to have gone to the boat but I have a matinée tomorrow. How jolly for them. . . . *I go to London* next month.

TOM

Really?

MADELEINE

They're taking the whole company. I am so excited about it.

TOM

It's just the play London will like.

MADELEINE

Do you think so? Isn't it too American?

TOM

It couldn't be for London.

MADELEINE

[*Smiling.*] Do they understand us as well as that?

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TOM

Better. They've had more American plays than their own since 1914.

MADELEINE

I do hope they'll like it. It's one of the things I've dreamed of. Making a success in London.

TOM

I'll try and be at your "first-night." My headquarters are in London.

MADELEINE

Isn't that splendid? Do come. And let me know afterwards, will you?

TOM

I'd be glad to.

MADELEINE

Aren't you excited about going to London?

TOM

No. I did look forward to it at first. But oh, I don't know—I've rather lost interest.

MADELEINE

What a shame!

TOM

Isn't it?

MADELEINE

It's a great tragedy when one loses interest. I never do now. I spend all my time preparing.

TOM

Do you?

MADELEINE

[*Nods.*] I didn't realize until I went on the stage how really ignorant I am. I thought I was quite fairly

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well educated until I played my first part. I found I couldn't walk, or talk or listen or stand still. I was entirely feet and hands. No body. No brain. No voice. Nothing.

TOM

[*Smiling.*] Judging from tonight you must have learned fast.

MADELEINE

Thank you. . . . Oh! but all I have still to learn! I think it's the hardest profession in the world. And the most absorbing. You should understand music, painting, dancing, fencing, *people* and have a smattering of other languages—[*smiling*]—after you've really learned your own. . . . I'm trying to.—Then you should know all walks of life. Be able to cry bitterly or be frenzied with rage or go into paroxysms of laughter. Curse, pray, beseech, command. A Queen in one play, a harlot in the next. A Goddess or a servant-girl. And have the imagination to be the character completely the hours you are on the stage. Quite an undertaking for a conventional person who's only known my own silly little group of people. We never thought anything mattered as long as we had a good time.

TOM

Why did you take it up? You didn't have to.

MADELEINE

I thought it was easy! It *looked* easy and the people in it seemed so jolly and happy. I had quite a shock when I got my first part—through Arthur.

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TOM

Oh?

MADELEINE

He rather liked me once upon a time.

TOM

Ah!

MADELEINE

He took me one day to a manager and he engaged me on the spot.

TOM

How fortunate.

MADELEINE

I found out afterwards it wasn't because I impressed him, but Arthur knew where to get a special brand of liquor the manager liked. At least that's what Arthur said.

TOM

It sounds feasible.

MADELEINE

And the part wasn't very important. So I started—a little more than a year ago. It was heart-breaking at first; wretched. But now I enjoy every minute of the day.

TOM

And night?

MADELEINE

No. This is an orgy for me. I never go to parties any more. They spoil the whole morning. And I love my mornings now. But I couldn't refuse Marian and Arthur. Isn't it wonderful—their marrying?

TOM

Isn't it? [*Evasively.*]

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MADELEINE

I was astonished. She used to talk of *you* all last year. [*He looks away.*] It must have been very sudden. She always was impulsive. What a dear she is! I met her today dashing about buying everything imaginable. The car was full of boxes. She had more in her arms. I told her she should wait for Paris and she laughed deliciously and said she'd buy more there. Oh, well! It's a wonderful time in one's life, and one only has it once.

TOM

I've known some daring exceptions.

MADELEINE

Marian won't be one. She's the kind that marries once and, hit or miss, sticks to it.

[TOM *is quite distressed—presses his hand over his forehead.*]

MADELEINE

And Arthur's a perfect dear. And now that he's married, he'll quiet down and be ever so good to Marian. I'm sure of that. [*Laughs as she thinks.*]

Wouldn't it be wonderful if we all met in London or Paris?

TOM

Wouldn't it?

MADELEINE

We must try to arrange it. Have a real American dinner. Real American news: a meeting of the clans three thousand miles from New York.

[JIM *and* NED, *fairly well lit, come in from the passage.*]

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JIM

[*Speaking so that by the time he has finished they are facing* TOM *and* MADELEINE.] But the funniest part was, when Bill was taking four gallons for a week-end and ran the car right over an embankment. [*Almost cries with laughter, then suddenly stops short.*] Hello, Tom. [*Shakes hands.*]

NED

[MADELEINE *shakes hands.*] Fancy you! I haven't seen you around anywhere. And how's Tom? [*Shakes* TOM'S *hand.*]

JIM

[*Bending over* MADELEINE.] Renegade.

MADELEINE

Why?

JIM

Desertress. You've jilted us. Every party I ask feverishly "Where's Madeleine?" And they answer gloomily "Not here." Who is he?

MADELEINE

It's a *she.*

JIM

Oh?

MADELEINE

At least I like to think it a *she.*

JIM

Well, who is *her?* [*Laughs.*]

MADELEINE

My art. [*Laughs.*]

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NED

Where's the bride?

JIM

And groom?

MADELEINE

Dancing, I suppose. I've only just come.

JIM

Hello. Look. [*Points to refreshment table; hurries to it.*]

NED

[*Follows him eagerly.*]
[*Filling glass.*] Madeleine?

MADELEINE

No, thanks.

NED

Just a spot?

MADELEINE

Not even a drop.

NED

Teeny one? [*She shakes her head.*] Tom? Of course not, you're a dry. [*Mixes his own.*]

JIM

[*Coming down to* MADELEINE, *glass in hand.*] What's the matter? Feeling blue?

MADELEINE

[*Smiling up at him.*] Not at all. Never jollier.

JIM

Then why not——? [*Holding up glass.*]

MADELEINE

I've stopped.

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JIM

Why? Can't you get any good stuff? Arthur knows where you can.

MADELEINE

No. Besides I've a matinée tomorrow.

JIM

All the more reason.

MADELEINE

No.—Can't do it any more, Jim.

JIM

Why, every actress I know takes all she wants.

MADELEINE

Actress?

JIM

Sure.

MADELEINE

Where do they act?

JIM

Anywhere

MADELEINE

For instance?

JIM

Well—musical things, you know. . . . I never go to the theatre myself . . . just musical comedy or revue. . . . But I know lots of actresses. . . . Lots. [*Smiles broadly as he thinks of them.*]

MADELEINE

Oh—I see. You mean the "non-commissioned ladies of the stage"?

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NED

[*As the bell rings off in the distance, ranges himself alongside* JIM *and sings.*]

"Look out; here come the damn police, the damn police,"

JIM

[*Singing with him.*]

"The damn police. Look out; here come the damn police,

"The damn police are here."*

MADELEINE

Then you *do* go to the theatre. That's from a play.

NED

[*Laughing.*] I know. I thought it was a *musical* show.

JIM

So he took me. "Lillian," he called it.

[ETTA *and* MAUD-ETHEL *enter in evening dress.* NED *and* JIM *arm in arm march up to them singing the same chorus.*]

ETTA

How festive! Hello, Tom. Why Madeleine, dearest. [*Sits beside her.*]

MAUD-ETHEL

Where did you get it? [*Looking from* NED *to* JIM.]

JIM

It's a touching story. Ned and I found a man——

* Sung in "Liliom."

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MAUD-ETHEL

Never mind. . . . Why, Tom. . . . I am glad. . . . And the actress. [*Kisses* MADELEINE *on both cheeks.*] Madeleine, my dear, you're too wonderful. Didn't think you could do it. Really I didn't. Did you, Etta?

[JIM *and* NED *mix drinks for* ETTA *and* MAUD-ETHEL.]

ETTA

I haven't seen it yet. But I'm going.

MAUD-ETHEL

Oh, you've got to. Madeleine's too adorable. [*To* MADELEINE.] It must be trying to play a *good* woman. But you make her almost interesting. Really you do.

ETTA

Is she a good woman?

MAUD-ETHEL

I should say so. Sticks to one husband and everything. Don't you, my dear? [MADELEINE *smiles and nods.*]

ETTA

How mushy!

MAUD-ETHEL

Not the way Madeleine plays it. Made me cry, really you did.

ETTA

It must be fun having a different apartment in every act. That's the kind of part I'd like to play. Some bite to it.

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JIM

[*Handing her glass.*] Where would you like the apartments, Etta?

ETTA

I'd like *four.* Washington Square when she starts out. The forties after she's broken the ice.—The seventies when she meets a senator and Riverside Drive when she marries Wall Street and kills herself after her real lover turns up and throws the money in her face.

[*General laugh during which the young ladies drink.*]

JIM

[*To Madeleine.*] Change your mind? A quick one?

MADELEINE

No, thank you.

JIM

Come on. Show your sporting blood.

MADELEINE

No, thanks.

JIM

Really quit?

MADELEINE

Yes.

JIM

Never?

MADELEINE

I can't afford to any more.

JIM

It *does* cost a lot. Still there it is, free and flowing. [*Points to table.*]

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MADELEINE

It costs an actress more than the price, Jim. Face, voice, figure. You can't buy them back.

JIM

Well—if you don't take anything I don't see what you do with yourself. Can't sleep all day. All the actresses I've known——

[ARTHUR *comes in from passage. He has evidently "had a few" earlier in the evening. Is genial, full of spirits. A little noisy.*]

NED

Hello—The groom. [*Grabs* JIM'S *arm, they advance to meet* ARTHUR, *calling.*] Hail! Hail! Hail! [*Slaps him on the back—shakes him by the hand—greets him very ostentatiously.*]

ARTHUR

[*Laughingly returns the greeting. Then turns to the charmers. Shakes hand with them.*] Jolly of you to come, Mad. Marian'll be so pleased.

MADELEINE

I had to, Arthur. I wanted to wish you Godspeed and luck.

ARTHUR

I know. You always wish me luck, don't you?

MADELEINE

Of course I do. [*Meaningly.*] And Marian!

ARTHUR

You brought it to us, Madeleine. You introduced us.

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[*Sees* TOM *standing quite near—his face set and hard.*] Hello, Tom. [*Shakes hands with him.*] Why aren't you all dancing?

MADELEINE

I've only just come.

MAUD-ETHEL

So have we. We'll dance the next.

[JIM *and* NED *come down each side of* ARTHUR, *take his arm and lead him to the refreshment table.*]

JIM

You might ask us to have something, eh, Ned?

NED

I rather expected him to.

ARTHUR

My dear fellow, it's there. Why didn't you help yourselves?

JIM

Not without you. Could we?

NED

I should say not. I do feel a bit faint. It's so long—— May I, Arthur? [*Winks at* JIM.]

ARTHUR

[*Mixing drinks at table.*] Why, of course. Stupid of you to have waited for me.

MAUD-ETHEL

I didn't notice much waiting.

ETTA

It was the first thing they did.

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JIM

We'll jazz all night and carry you on board.

ARTHUR

I'm game. Hurrah! [*Drinks.*] Ah!

JIM

Smooth seas.

NED

[*Holding up glass.*] Good liquor on board.

JIM

The wine of the country in dear old Paris, France.

NED

Pretty frocks for Marian.

JIM

Paquin.

NED

Jewels from Cartier.

JIM

All the fun of the fair after dark.

NED

And may you never draw a sober breath until you get back.

JIM

The Groom! The Groom! Arthur!

NED

The Groom! Arthur! [*Both drink—emptying their glasses.*]

JIM

And one more for good measure. [*Drinks and fills glass.*]

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NED

That's sound. [*Fills his.*]

ARTHUR

Right. My turn to give a toast. [*Fills his glass, holds it up.*] My friends! [*Looks smilingly and happily at them all and drinks.*]

JIM

I'm in on that. [*Drinks.*]

NED

You can't leave me out. [*Drinks.*]
To Marian. [*Drinks.*]

JIM

Mrs. Arthur. [*Drinks.*]

ARTHUR

[*Looks at* TOM.] You're not drinking?

TOM

No. I don't.

ARTHUR

Of course, I forgot. [*Looking insolently at* TOM.] Doesn't nauseate you to watch us, does it?

TOM

[*Looking steadily at* ARTHUR.] Not in the least.

[*The music stops. The doors open from the ballroom and* MARIAN *and several guests come through the passage into the room.* ARTHUR *meets the others and takes them to the refreshment table.*

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MARIAN is in a charming evening dress:—she is very white and tired. They give her a boisterous welcome. Amid much chatter she shakes hands with MAUD-ETHEL; ETTA, *etc., etc., finally reaches* MADELEINE *whom she kisses and sits beside. During her passage to* MADELEINE *she is greeted with—*

ETTA

Marian, dear.

MAUD-ETHEL

You look too adorable.

TOM

[*Nervously.*] How are you, Marian?

MARIAN

I'm worn out. I've been rushing about since early morning. I nearly sent you a message to excuse me. If I'd only been a guest I would have. That's the delightful thing about being only a *guest.* A headache, a sick aunt, or a distant dead relative make splendid excuses. But as a hostess—oh, no! There's aspirin for a headache; for a sick aunt—a doctor; and for a *dead, distant* relation—a *coffin.* The hostess is the *piper.* She calls the tune and must be there to have it played. . . . It was so sweet of you all to come. It was Arthur's idea. He felt you'd all like to see us before we go.

JIM

Good for you, Arthur. We do.

NED

Didn't we see you meet for the first time?

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ETTA

And fall in love?

MAUD-ETHEL

And spoon all over the club-porch?

NED

Weren't we there when you bolted?

MAUD-ETHEL

And made Arthur's awful thing of a father so mad?

JIM

Who welcomed you to New York from your wedding trip?

NED

And we're going to give you the send-off of your lives tomorrow morning.

JIM

We'll keep Arthur company until it's time to start.

NED

And, like the real pals we are, we'll bear him up the gang-plank.

MARIAN

[*Trying to laugh but more than a little anxious and distressed.*] Oh, no. Nothing like that. We'll just have a dance or two. That's all.

JIM

All?

NED

With that band?

JIM

Lew Isaacs, the "Jazz Demon" from the "Grove"? If we quit before daylight he'd be *hurt.*

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NED

I should say so. He'd sob all down his diamonds. [*To* MARIAN.] May I have the next?

MARIAN

No, Ned. I'm so tired. I can't dance any more tonight.

ARTHUR

Oh, come. You mustn't throw a chill into everyone.

MARIAN

[*Hurriedly.*] Why, of course not. Perhaps I'll be all right in a little while. Just now I couldn't.

ARTHUR

I know what would put you right in a minute.

MARIAN

What, Arthur?

ARTHUR

A little glass of cool, dry, well-iced champagne. Right out of the bucket. See? [*Pointing to it.*]

MARIAN

[*Shaking her head and smiling.*] No, dear.

[TOM *makes a movement forward.* MADELEINE *watches anxiously.*]

JIM

It's the very thing, Marian.

NED

Of course it is. Let me open it. May I, Arthur? I *love* that expectant moment before the reluctant cork

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gives up to the steady pressure of finger and thumb. May I?

ARTHUR

Surest thing you know.

[*Goes to table with* NED: *together they open bottle and arrange glasses.*]

ETTA

Do, Marian dear. It's too heavenly when you're fagged.

MAUD-ETHEL

Works like magic with me. Really it does, Marian.

MARIAN

Awful stuff. Gets up your nose and puckers up your tongue. Brrh! [*Shudders violently.*]

MAUD-ETHEL

It's saved me many a time. Oh, many a time. I was so dead after one party I could hardly breathe. One little glass sent me way up to the ether and I floated through two more parties the same night and got home when dawn was breaking fresh as paint.

ETTA

On *one* glass? It must have been a long time ago.

MAUD-ETHEL

Oh, I took a few more to keep me going.

ETTA

I was going to say.

ARTHUR

[*Going to* MARIAN *with glass of champagne.*] Here we are.

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MARIAN

I'd rather not, Arthur.

MADELEINE

Don't press her. She doesn't like it.

ARTHUR

Come on. This glass will have more effect on you than a whole bottle would on me.

JIM

I should say so.

NED

Or even *two,* Arthur.

ARTHUR

[*Pressing* MARIAN.] Just a glass. Then we'll have a dance and by the time it's over, you'll be feeling great. [*Waits: then angrily.*] Come on. Don't make such a fuss. [MARIAN *looks quickly at him, takes the glass from him.*] Down she goes.

JIM

Fancy needing coaxing—*these* days.

NED

Makes me all creepy. [*Shivering.*]

ETTA

It's really rather hectic, Marian's first glass!

MAUD-ETHEL

The road to ruin.

ETTA

Such a nice road.

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JIM

Paved with broken bottles.

ARTHUR

[*Irritably to* MARIAN.] Come on!

NED

They're off.

MAUD-ETHEL

Let's go!

[MARIAN *drinks the glass.* TOM *and* MADELEINE *watch her anxiously.* JIM *swallows in imitation with her turning to* NED *who does likewise.*]

ETTA

[*As* MADELEINE *finishes the glass.*] Doesn't it feel good?

MAUD-ETHEL

I'd love to have my first glass again.

MARIAN

[*Shivers; hands glass to* ARTHUR.] How bitter!

JIM

Put a lump of sugar in the next.

ARTHUR

Monticello—1904? Not if I know it.

[*Goes to table, replaces glass, then goes to door of room and gives signal for dance. The music crashes from the ball-room. Amid much chatter the other guests go into the ball-room.* JIM *asks* ETTA, ARTHUR *asks* MAUD-ETHEL, NED *asks* MADELEINE.]

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MARIAN

I'd like Madeleine to stay with me, Ned. You and Tom cut in on the others. Do you mind?

NED

Not a bit. Come on, Tom. [*To* MARIAN.] Wait until the fizz gets in its fine work. You'll dance every one.

[*Goes out.*]

TOM

May I have one later, Marian?

MARIAN

Yes, Tom, of course. Close the doors, please, when you go in. And do ask them not to play so loudly.

TOM

All right I will.

[*Goes out, closing the doors. After a few moments the band quiets down.*]

MARIAN

[*Affectionately to* MADELEINE.] It is nice having you here.

MADELEINE

I'm sorry you gave in to Arthur.

MARIAN

What was I to do? I hate a fuss.

MADELEINE

He shouldn't have insisted. He knew you didn't want to take it.

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MARIAN

I'm rather glad he did. I don't feel anything like so tired. [*Quite animatedly.*] I really feel very much better. I do, really. Much.

MADELEINE

I know. Then it passes and you feel fagged again and then you take another—and another—and so on through an evening and into the night. I've done it. Then in the morning, after a restless, tossing-about, you wake up, your mouth parched, your nerves jumping, your face bagged and drawn, your eyes dull, no interest in anything. [*Shivers.*] It's not worth it.

MARIAN

[*Laughs brightly.*] What a picture! [*Pantomimes the drawn face, the listless movements, the dull eye and the jumping nerves.*] Is that to be my fate?

MADELEINE

I'd be doing it now, I suppose, if I hadn't a real interest in my life. Something that fills up all my time. I'm so proud of being allowed to be an actress and so jealous about what people say of us that I never give them the slightest chance to belittle the theatre thru anything I do.

MARIAN

I know you don't. I know.—But please don't think we are going to have any such night as the one you've described.

MADELEINE

I'm not so sure—as far as Arthur is concerned. It's a shame, Marian.

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MARIAN

From the time we go on board he will take nothing until we reach Paris.

MADELEINE

And then——? *This* every night?

MARIAN

Certainly not.

MADELEINE

That's all they talk about when they get back from Paris. The Americans they met; the good times they had; the wine they drank. Oh! One never hears anything else among the Jims, the Neds and the Arthurs.

MARIAN

Madeleine, please, don't put Arthur in that class.

MADELEINE

He's been in it ever since I've known him.

MARIAN

He won't be any more.

MADELEINE

Oh, Marian, you don't know how different life is when you have something to think about. Something to do. I wish you had.

MARIAN

I have. Taking care of Arthur. [*Laughs.*] That will take some doing, you think. This is only a little fun. Did 'ems think we were beasts cos we wanted to be silly and dance and drink just before we sailed

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away? Oh, how solemn baby is! [*Jazzes to the faint tune in the distance.*]

MADELEINE

[*Laughing in spite of her wish not to.*] Oh! Marian.

MARIAN

[*Laughs gleefully.*] That's right. Laugh! Even though you are a serious actress and a very prim and respectable one. Laugh! [*Suddenly and impulsively putting her arms around* MADELEINE.] Arthur is such a dear, Madeleine. We've been like two children laughing and chatting and playing games. Not a care. Not even a tiff, much less a quarrel. It has been so sweet. We'll always be happy and tender and thoughtful of each other. . . . That's the way to keep marriage perfect.

MADELEINE

It won't be if you plunge into the same set over there.

MARIAN

But we won't. We won't. . . . I keep telling you we won't.

MADELEINE

I wish you were going to Italy. That's where I'd love to go. The pictures, the music, the beautiful soft language and the heavenly sky. Not all the cheap New York-ese grafted onto a French city. They never see Paris, really. Just the shops and the race-course, boxing exhibitions and the foul things put on just for the American visitor. [*Lifts her shoulders and drops them in a gesture of disgust.*] Out half the night and the

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glorious morning gone before they're well enough to start a new day. Ugh! [*Shivers.*]

MARIAN

Madeleine! You mustn't think we're going to live that kind of life. Don't judge Arthur by tonight. He's excited, naturally. The first time either of us has gone abroad. [*Suddenly; seriously.*] He's only liked this sort of thing because he's never known anything better. Ned and Jim were his idea of real men because they've made time pass pleasantly for him while he's been with them. But I've been showing him there is another life just as attractive, just as amusing and infinitely more lasting. [*Waits, while the music beats out from behind the closed doors.*] Why has that kind of music satisfied him? Because he never knew, until I took him quite recently, the beauty of real music. . . . That was why. Now he wonders how he ever found pleasure in that discord. . . . During the time we have been married I've taken him to some heavenly concerts and the opera. He didn't like them very much at first. But after a while he *did*. We've looked at beautiful pictures and read absorbing books. It has been like opening a new world to him. He's taken a drink when he wanted it. But that's all. And they've been so seldom—so far between—so—so—unimportant to him. That part of his life is *finished*. *Finished*. . . . Poor Arthur. He's never had the opportunity to expand. Why, he doesn't know his own country. Hardly his own language. After a trip abroad I'm going all over the United States with him. Show him how wonderful they are and

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what real men can be. He has only met the careless-living, never-a-thought-for-the-morrow kind. Men who run round and round in a mouse-trap. After all, what chance has he had? His home influences were of the worst. A mother, nervy and peevish and hysterical. A father who alternately cursed or beat him. Then spoiled him. Not one of the boys he chummed with cared for anything except shirking in class and amusing themselves out of it. Naturally Arthur drifted with the rest. Then he finally got to college. There he met an older set who drank, talked obscenely, racketed nightly in the nearby town and were thrown out of cabarets. . . . But there is really nothing vicious about him. Just habits, contracted through the wilful indifference of his father. Parents cannot, must not be indifferent, Madeleine. It's a divine office, being a parent. [MADELEINE *kisses her.*] When we get home we will form a new circle of friends who will stimulate the finer things in him. I have dreamed it all. . . . If I fail it will be my own fault, not Arthur's. He could have lived his life without me. I couldn't have lived mine, Madeleine, without him. [*Stares out into the future.*] If he goes back it will be because I've not had patience enough—strength enough—or loved deeply enough.

MADELEINE

Of course he won't go back. I am so sorry I said what I did. Stupid of me. There. [*Puts her hand on* MARIAN'S.] Forgive me. Everything is going to turn out splendidly. Oh! And we'll meet on the other side.

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[MARIAN *looks at her.*] Yes, we will. They're taking the play to London—and *me*. Next month.

MARIAN

Isn't that wonderful! I'm so glad.

MADELEINE

Tom is coming to my "first-night." You and Arthur could fly over, sup with me, and be back in Paris the next morning.

MARIAN

We will. That's another thing I want to interest Arthur in. The theatre that matters. The real theatre. Plays like the one you're in. Not brassy music, nudity, common jokes and the laughter of fools. [*Laughing gleefully.*] It's like taking a little child by the hand and showing him all the things I like. Poor Arthur's seen nothing worth while. It *has* been fun taking him to all the places I wouldn't think of telling my jazz-friends I knew anything about. It's been *such* fun.

[*Some of the dancers return. Their partners bring them refreshments.* JIM, ARTHUR *and* NED *immediately go to the table as though drawn there thru an impelling force. Corks begin to pop, siphons hiss, ice rattles in the glasses. The two delightful girls,* ETTA *and* MAUD-ETHEL, *sink in great exhaustion on chairs and proceed to fan themselves with minute and somewhat damp handkerchiefs.* TOM *lounges over near* MARIAN. JIM *and* NED *loyally bring* MAUD-ETHEL *and* ETTA *refreshments.* ARTHUR *drinks copiously, then brings* MARIAN *a glass of champagne at the end of the following.*]

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MAUD-ETHEL

Better, dear?

MARIAN

Ever so much.

ETTA

You were very wise to stay here.

MAUD-ETHEL

Wasn't she?

MARIAN

Why?

ETTA

The floor's too sticky for words.

MAUD-ETHEL

I hate the band so near.

ETTA

It's too loud for a small room.

MAUD-ETHEL

And Tom wouldn't cut in. Just sulked at the door.

ETTA

Come into the next one and get some life into it. [JIM *hands glass.*] Thanks.

MAUD-ETHEL

[*Takes a glass; sips it; makes a wry face.*] I don't like it tonight.

ETTA

Nor I.

MAUD-ETHEL

Sickly.

ETTA

No taste at all to me.

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JIM

Monticello—1904!

NED

It's too bad about you. Getting bored?

ETTA

Fed up.

MAUD-ETHEL

I'm sick of jazz.

ETTA

And this. [*Hands glass back to* NED.]

JIM

[*Sidles up to* MADELEINE *as though he was "fed-up" with* ETTA *and* MAUD-ETHEL.] You know, Madeleine—of course I don't go to the theatre myself—except girl-shows—but tell me, do they *really* make love on the stage?

MADELEINE

What do you think?

JIM

Oh, I don't know. Haven't thought about it really. Of course I don't go myself. But you hear things. I've been told they really do. And that the leading-man is always in love with the leading-woman and she with him.

MADELEINE

Have you really?

JIM

Heard it heaps of times.

MADELEINE

So they don't have to act? Just play themselves? Make real love, in public, eight times a week?

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JIM

Of course, I don't know. You see I never——

MADELEINE

—go yourself?

JIM

No.—But when they embrace and all that—do they really feel it?

MADELEINE

Would it please you to think they did?

JIM

I fancy the public likes to think it. Gives them a bit of "extra." Eh?

MADELEINE

Would the public like to think real blood was spilled when someone was killed on the stage?

JIM

Oh, well, you know——

MADELEINE

If they want *real* embraces why not real *murders*?

JIM

See what you mean. Of course I don't go.

MADELEINE

You should. I'd like to have an intelligent man's viewpoint.

JIM

Perhaps I will.

MADELEINE

Do.

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ARTHUR

[*Very flushed—a little unsteady but very happy—holds out glass to* MARIAN.] Why, you look a thousand percent more yourself. Less faded an' everything. You look sparkling. See what one little glass will do. Give this one a chance.

MARIAN

No more, dear.

ARTHUR

Come on, let's be jolly.

MARIAN

I'm quite jolly enough.

ARTHUR

Nothing on board ship. Not a drop. That's a promise. Just tonight. Last time in the old country. Here we go.

MARIAN

[*Shakes her head.*] No, Arthur.

ARTHUR

Just to please me. Won't ask you again. Madeleine and Tom would freeze any party. Let 'em see you're a "good fellow." Just sip it and show 'em an example.

MARIAN

[*To stop any further discussion sips it and hands glass back to* ARTHUR.] There.

ARTHUR

That's the stuff. [*To* TOM.] See? Do you good too. Then you wouldn't stand around as if you didn't know you were alive.

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TOM

I am afraid I'm rather a damper.

ARTHUR

No. A *dryer.* [*Laughs uproariously as he turns to* NED *and* JIM. *He is growing more unsteady and noisier momentarily.*] Hear that? Tom said to me—of course he's not drinking anything—he said to me he was a *damper* on the party and I said "No, Tom," I said, "No! You're a *dryer!*" [*He laughs loudly.*]

[JIM *looks at* NED *and sobs on his shoulder.*]

ARTHUR

[*Turns to* MAUD-ETHEL *and* ETTA.] Must tell you. Tom said to me—

[*The band starts again, drowning* ARTHUR'S *voice; he goes on telling his story to the amazed young ladies: when the music reaches a few quiet bars* ARTHUR *is heard shrieking.*]

I said "No, Tom, you're a *dryer!*" [*He is almost inarticulate, so overcome is he by his brilliant mot.*]

ETTA

Did you really say that?

MAUD-ETHEL

Too wonderful!

[*As* ARTHUR *lurches over to tell* MADELEINE, *chuckling to himself,* MAUD-ETHEL *and* ETTA *look at each other, then turn to* NED *and* JIM. *The four turn to each other and proceed to discuss him, tho exactly what they say cannot be heard thru the in-*

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sistence of Isaac's band. They start into the dance room but the girls, thru a quiet bar of the music, can be heard protesting.]

ETTA

But it's so hot.

MAUD-ETHEL

And noisy. . . .

ETTA

I'm going after this one.

MAUD-ETHEL

So am I.

[*They disappear into the room.*]

ARTHUR

[*Going to* MADELEINE.] Hear what I said to Tom?

MADELINE

Yes I did. [*As they move toward the dance room.*]

ARTHUR

I suppose it was bad, eh?

MADELEINE

It was priceless, Arthur.

ARTHUR

I get a good one once in awhile. Hear what I said about Jim's home-brew—— [*As the band swells up he calls out.*] Not so loud. Damn it—we're not in a barn.

[*Band plays softly. . . .* MARIAN *takes* TOM'S *arm.*]

TOM

Don't dance if you're tired.

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MARIAN

I'm not. Arthur's prescription did that. Tiredness all gone.

TOM

I'm sorry you took it, Marian.

MARIAN

Why? There's no harm——

TOM

[*Checking her.*] Ah! I can almost hear your father.

MARIAN

But *is* there? *One* glass.

TOM

You shouldn't have given in to him. Make him do what *you* want.

MARIAN

He does.

TOM

Does he?

MARIAN

Yes.

TOM

Oh, Marian. I'm afraid. Afraid. You've been married three months and here are the same thoughtless empty-headed, loud-mouthed toughs around you.

MARIAN

They haven't been for the last three months. Arthur wanted them tonight to come just to say "Good-bye." That's all. After tonight we'll never see them again. At any rate very rarely.

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TOM

When you were engaged Arthur was never going to drink again.

MARIAN

No, Tom. Drink *too much*. There's quite a difference.

TOM

He's drunk now.

MARIAN

He's not.

TOM

Very nearly. He'll be quite, before this breaks up.

MARIAN

And why not? It's the last time.

TOM

[*Shaking his head.*] He's been "last-timing" ever since I've known him. [*Looking intently at her.*] I *am* afraid, Marian.

MARIAN

[*Sharply.*] Don't be ridiculous, Tom.

TOM

I'm sorry I said that. I shouldn't have come tonight.

MARIAN

I'm glad you came. I wanted you to come.

TOM

I felt as you were going away—and—I—didn't know when I'd see you again. . . . So I came. . . . Now—shall we dance?

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MARIAN

[*Sits: pouts.*] No. . . . I don't know whether I'm more hurt or angry at this continual criticism of Arthur. It's so unfair. . . . What has he done? As thousands of others do. . . . And *their* wives don't have delegates waiting in line to condole with, or caution, or shake their heads and say "I'm afraid." I want neither pity nor advice, and I certainly don't want people going about being frightened for me. . . . It's too stupid. . . . I'm really a little tired of it, Tom. . . . [*Tapping her shoe impatiently on the carpet.*] More than a little angry . . . and quite a good deal hurt. . . . First Madeleine . . . then you. . . . After all, even though Madeleine is my friend, it doesn't give her the privilege of criticising my husband. . . . That's mine.—And I won't share it with anyone. . . . And because you liked me——

TOM

[*Simply; earnestly.*] I love you, Marian.

MARIAN

If you did——

TOM

I do.

MARIAN

Then whatever I do should be right because I do it.

TOM

It is.

MARIAN

You're very difficult to argue with. . . . I won't have Arthur found fault with. . . . Why, even you and Madeleine grudge me a glass of champagne because Arthur

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gave it me. . . . Childish!—Absurd!—Friendship has its rights—yes.—But it also has its *limits*.—And I must say that's *the limit*.—One glass!—You must love me a lot to want to deprive me of that little "drop of comfort."—And I so tired.—You knew that.—I'm surprised, Tom. Really surprised.—And hurt.—Oh, I shall be glad to get away from all this carping and criticism. . . . At least Arthur makes no effort to conceal whatever he does. . . . If he exceeds the speed-limit he always does it where a traffic-policeman can see him.—And if he wants to hit anyone he doesn't do it in secret. Oh, no. Everyone can see. . . . His faults are on the surface—and they're the easiest corrected. I'm tired of it . . . disgusted with it. . . . [*Facing* TOM.] I'll hear nothing more against him from anyone. [*Sees the pained look in his eyes.*] Sorry Tom. . . . I know you mean it for the best. . . . It came at the wrong time. . . . Sorry.

TOM

You're quite right, Marian. I asked for a snubbing. I deserved it.

MARIAN

No! No! Not a snubbing . . . horrid little word.—And you mustn't take it like that. Come take the frown off your face.—Be jolly.—Laugh.—Come, smile, like the Tom I like so much. . . . Come. . . . Smile. . . . [TOM *smiles half-heartedly.*]

You can do much better than that. . . . Grouchy old dear. Now I'll dance. [*He puts his hand through her arm.*]

[*As they go towards the room the band stops and*

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some of the crowd filter back. NED *and* JIM *go to the table as though faint.* ETTA *and* MAUD-ETHEL, *in the last stages of boredom and fatigue, seek chairs near each other. . . .* ARTHUR *comes in last with* MADELEINE.]

ARTHUR

I thought you were going to dance? [*Glancing at* MARIAN, *then at* TOM.]

MARIAN

I am. The next.

ARTHUR

[*Glaring at* TOM.] Haven't cut that out too? Have you?

TOM

Oh, no, Arthur. [*Forcing a genial smile.*]

[NED *and* JIM *bring refreshments to* MAUD-ETHEL *and* ETTA. MADELEINE *sits near* MARIAN. ARTHUR *goes to table and pours out and drinks several times. He takes one, turns away, thinks again and then as tho magnetized by the table goes back and has a third. Then he fills a glass and, trying to avoid spilling contents and at the same time keep a straight course with a certain dignity, goes to* MARIAN. . . . *Meanwhile the following dialogue has taken place.*]

JIM

[*Now quite mellow, approaches* MADELEINE *surreptitiously and stands looking intently at her; she looks up and smiles; he smiles down at her.*] Do you believe in complexes?

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MADELEINE

[*Smiling.*] What kind?

JIM

Any kind?

MADELEINE

Which one is worrying you?

JIM

I haven't quite got on to it yet. But I *know* I have some from what I hear.

MADELEINE

The most complex are the really simple-minded.

JIM

Are they?

MADELEINE

Usually. They love to attach importance to everything they do—particularly to what they *dream*. It gives them a fictitious valuation to themselves.

JIM

That so? I don't know much about it. Just what I hear.—What's the *inferiority* one? Sounds a bird.

MADELEINE

The inferiority complex is the cloak the inefficient wear to cover their inadequacy.

JIM

That so? [*Disappointed.*] Thought it was something quite different . . . *I've got it!*

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MADELEINE

Have you?

JIM

Sure. Breaks out all over me when I talk to you. [*She laughs.*] What am I to do about it?

MADELEINE

Talk me right out of your system to a sympathetic listener.

JIM

Couldn't I talk it out with you?

MADELEINE

That would aggravate it.

JIM

Tell you what—I'll see your play tomorrow night—altho' I've a complex against the theatre.—I'll go to the mat with it.

MADELEINE

How brave of you!

JIM

And I'm going to talk about you to everyone—because you're the first actress I've ever known who takes herself seriously and doesn't drink—or nothing. Didn't think there was such a thing. I'll go tomorrow night. —Mark me.—I owe it to myself—and to my complex.

NED

[*Calling from table.*] Jim—Come here.

JIM

[*To* MADELEINE.] 'S'cuse me.—Don't you do it!—Acting's not serious. . . . Biggest joke—[*Going up to*

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JIM *and* ARTHUR *at table.*]—Madeleine hands me the biggest laugh——

[TOM *sits by* MADELEINE *and* MARIAN *and talks to them.*]

ETTA

I'm so fagged.

MAUD-ETHEL

My slippers hurt. [*Easing them by almost taking them off.*]

ETTA

I saw you dancing with Ned. [*Laughs.*]

MAUD-ETHEL

Isn't he terrible? When he doesn't tread on you he tears things. [*Fingering portions of her drapery that have suffered.*]

[*Roars of laughter come from the table at back,* ARTHUR'S *predominating.* MARIAN *looks at him anxiously.*]

MAUD-ETHEL

Don't see much change in Arthur, do you?

ETTA

Yes. . . . He's noisier.

MAUD-ETHEL

I never saw anyone look less married.

ETTA

Or any one *more* than Marian.

MAUD-ETHEL

Arthur's no cinch of a husband.

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ETTA

I'll have to give them up when I get back. Too strenuous for me.

MAUD-ETHEL

Funny. I was thinking that too.—You *are* flushed.

ETTA

Am I? [*Taking mirror from her hand bag and powdering.*] So I am. Your hair's all messy, dear.

MAUD-ETHEL

Thank you, dear. [*Fingering her hair.*] How nice Madeleine looks! So cool and everything in its place.

ETTA

Maud-Ethel, I tell you what. We're jazzing ourselves to bits.

MAUD-ETHEL

Funny. I was thinking that too.

ETTA

What do you say to giving it up for a while?

MAUD-ETHEL

I will. Will you?

ETTA

This is my last for quite some time.

MAUD-ETHEL

What I was thinking.

ETTA

Tom looks better than I've seen him.

MAUD-ETHEL

Doesn't seem to belong here.

[*Roar of laughter from table.*]

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ETTA

They do wear you. [*Shivers.*]

MAUD-ETHEL

Ned's is a horrid laugh. [*Shivers.*]

ETTA

I feel it in my shoulder-blades. [*Contracts shoulders.*]

MAUD-ETHEL

And Jim's stories. Pitiful. Laughs right on the point.

ETTA

I never listen any more. I laugh loudly with him and let it go at that.

MAUD-ETHEL

And we used to think them so jolly.

ETTA

Madeleine upsets me.—We must look frights beside her.

MAUD-ETHEL

[*Sitting up.*] I'm through. . . . So asinine.

ETTA

Isn't it? *Look* at Madeleine! . . .

ARTHUR

[*Reaches* MARIAN—*holding her glass and his own up as if performing a juggling-feat.*] Here you are, my dear. . . . Take it this time without any argument. See? . . .

MARIAN

[*Hesitates: Sees* TOM *and* MADELEINE *looking at her: tosses her head defiantly; takes it with a certain bra-*

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vado as tho justifying ARTHUR.] Thanks, Arthur, I will.

ARTHUR

Wait a minute. [*Holding her glass.*] To our leaving America and may it be a long time before we see it again. [*Drinks.*]

MARIAN

Not *too* long, Arthur.

ARTHUR

Can't be too long for me. I'm sick of this half-baked existing. We think we're a hell of a lot but we don't look so much to the other countries. Not by a damn sight.

MARIAN

[*In great distress; trying to restrain him.*] Arthur. [NED *and* JIM *stagger down to him.*]

ARTHUR

[*Continues with a sweeping gesture.*] This is having a wonderful time! . . . It is! Wonderful! Our idea of enjoying ourselves! . . . The limit! . . . I'd like to know what the *others* would think of us.

JIM

[*Genially.*] I don't care what anyone thinks of us. . . . It *is* a wonderful time you're giving us, Arthur. . . . And we're a wonderful people and don't you forget it.

NED

Bet your life we are.

ARTHUR

Bah—I've heard that until I'm sick of it. . . . Marian and I are going where people *do* things. . . . *Big* things. . . . Not talking blasted business all the

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time. How much they've made and are going to make. . . . Like my father. He's the type they judge us by abroad.

JIM

Now they're going to have *you,* Arthur.

NED

Sure! Hurrah for America *and* Arthur.

ARTHUR

Makes me so damn sick. All this boasting and bragging.

JIM

Well—don't do so much of it then.

ARTHUR

Me?

JIM

You're bragging *now.*

ARTHUR

Who is?

JIM

You are.

ARTHUR

About what?

JIM

Everything. . . . You can't hold your liquor. Never could. Bragging——

NED

And boasting——

JIM

Perfectly disgusting.

NED

Beastly.

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ARTHUR

[*Putting glass down unsteadily and facing them.*] You mean that? 'Cos if I thought you did——

JIM

[*Screaming with laughter in which* NED *joins.*] We've got his goat!

ARTHUR

[*Trying to be dignified.*] No. No goat about it. I've never boasted.

MARIAN

[*Trying to stop him.*] Arthur—don't let them tease you.

JIM

Silly old ass.

NED

Of course we didn't mean——

ARTHUR

I've never bragged about anything. . . . Nothing to brag about. . . . Except Marian.—Don't know why she married me.

[MARIAN *motions* NED *and* JIM *to go away from* ARTHUR. *They go up and out muttering contritely that they really did not mean anything.*]

ARTHUR

[*To* MARIAN, *trying to get control of himself.*] This is the last time. . . . Never again. . . . Last time. Honor. . . . Making a fool of myself, am I?

MARIAN

[*Hurriedly; ashamed.*] No, no. . . . Of course not. . . . Now we'll start a dance.

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ARTHUR

Have this one with me?

MARIAN

Why don't you rest, just this one?

ARTHUR

Ashamed of me?

MARIAN

No, no, Arthur.

ARTHUR

I'm all right.

MARIAN

I know you are.

ARTHUR

Have this one with me?

MARIAN

I've promised it.

ARTHUR

Pr-promised it? Who to?

MARIAN

Tom.

ARTHUR

[*Gloomily.*] Oh—is that so?

MARIAN

We won't see him again for so long.

ARTHUR

Don't care if I never see him.

MARIAN

[*Trying to get him to sit down.*] Now—Arthur—do——

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ARTHUR

[*Releasing himself from her rather roughly.*] NO —NO—Let me alone. [*Crosses to* ETTA.] Dance this with me?

ETTA

Oh, Arthur, I'm dead.

ARTHUR

Is that so? [*To* MAUD-ETHEL.] Dance this with me?

MAUD

Ned's put me out of commission. See—my slipper's off.

ARTHUR

Tha's so? Pretty good friends you are—eh? Maud-Ethel! Etta! Good friends, all right. [*Goes unsteadily to* MADELEINE.] Dance this with me?

MADELEINE

Why, certainly. [*Rises.*]

ARTHUR

You're all right, Madeleine. Always were. The salt of the earth, you are. The others! Pah! [*Sweeping gesture.*] They think I'm 'toxicated. You don't? [*Anxiously.*] Do you?

MADELEINE

Of course not, Arthur.

ARTHUR

I like you Madeleine. . . . Always did. . . . Real pal. . . .

[MARIAN *has gone to the door and given the signal.*

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. . . The dance music begins—ARTHUR *and* MADELEINE; TOM *and* MARIAN *go into the room to dance.* NED *and* JIM *plead with the two girls. Finally they yield.* MAUD-ETHEL *replaces her slipper*—ETTA *drags herself wearily up and they begin dancing in the room. . . . Passing the door* MARIAN *sees them and dances in with* TOM.. *Then* ARTHUR *dances in with* MADELEINE. *The bell rings long and loudly.*]

JIM

[*Shouting against the band.*]

"Look out; here come the damn police, the damn police."

[HALE *and* CARLTON *in dinner jackets come in.* TOM *and* MARIAN *stop dancing and greet them.* JIM *goes to dance room after a sign from* MARIAN *and closes the doors. The music sounds faintly.* ARTHUR *is standing by* MADELEINE *gazing at his father; her hand is on his forearm as tho restraining him.* JIM, ETTA, MAUD-ETHEL *and* NED *are standing still as tho puzzled and wondering what's going to happen.* CARLTON *looks over the whole room, his eyes rest on* ARTHUR.]

HALE

[*Heartily.*] Here, don't let us interrupt. . . . Go on. . . . Dance. . . . [*Takes* MARIAN *and jazzes singing.*]

"In the mornin', in the evenin'
Ain't we got fun?"

[*Stops; laughs.*] John and I dined together. I told

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him I was going to look in and he'd better come along and give you his blessing. He can't be at the boat. Hello, young people! [*Nods to all of the group who respond in their several ways.* "How are ye?" "So glad, Mr. Hale." . . . "Hello, Sportsman!" "How d'yer do."] . . . [*To* CARLTON.] As nice a little party as anyone could wish, eh?

CARLTON

Sure.

HALE

Making hay.

CARLTON

And they'll be doing it when the sun is shining. Fine. [*To* MARIAN, *holding out his hand.*] How are you, Mrs. Carlton?

MARIAN

Very well, Mr. Carlton.

CARLTON

How's everything going?

MARIAN

Wonderfully.

CARLTON

Looks like it. Oh, well—you have plenty of time.

MARIAN

For what?

CARLTON

Coming to me, bringing Arthur by the hand, and saying "Here's exhibit 'A'—Look at him."

MARIAN

I will.

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CARLTON

Sure you will. Don't put off starting too long.

MARIAN

I begin tomorrow on the boat.

CARLTON

Good a place as any—outside the "three-mile limit."

MARIAN

And I'll finish it in Paris.

CARLTON

Fine. That's the place to finish things in. Couldn't be better. You're starting right anyway. Always begin with the hardest part of the job if you want to get any place.

ARTHUR

[*To* HALE *furiously.*] Why did you bring him here? [*Indicating his father.*]

HALE

Why not?

ARTHUR

If he speaks to me I'll insult him.

HALE

Oh, come now. Where's the use of that kind of talk? [*Laughing cheerfully.*] Let us all be pleasant and jolly together.

ARTHUR

[*Unsteadily; glowering.*] Just come to spy on me. . . That's all. . . . To spy on me.

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HALE

Spy nothing! . . . [*Ruffling* ARTHUR'S *hair playfully.*]

ARTHUR

[*Furiously.*] Don't do that. And don't laugh so damned idiotically. I'm sick of all this laughing and noise. Sick of it. Glad to be out of it. All this being "Good-fellows." Anywhere for a drink and a jazz. Sick of it.

JIM

[*Trying to talk soberly.*] Meaning me?

NED

[*Also with an attempt at dignity.*] And *me?*

ETTA

[*To* MAUD-ETHEL, *anxiously.*] Let's ask Tom to take us home.

MAUD-ETHEL

Just what I was thinking. [*Goes to* TOM *and speaks urgently to him.*]

ARTHUR

[*Has turned to them with the sudden ugliness of a drunken man.*] Yes, both of you. And all like you.

JIM

What's the idea, Arthur?

NED

What have I done?

ARTHUR

I'm thru with this sort of thing. Thru. Can't do anything without a drink. Can't meet anywhere—but—mus' dance. I tell you I'm thru. I am. [*Distractedly.*]

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JIM

Who provided the liquor?

NED

And drank most of it?

JIM

Who brought the band?

ARTHUR

I did. And more fool me. [*Presses his forehead.*] Nightmare. That's what it is. Nightmare! Noise. Screaming. Silly laughing. All jumbled up in here. [*Almost shrieking.*] It'll drive me mad.

[MARIAN *goes anxiously to him.* CARLTON *slowly follows.*]

MARIAN

Arthur!

ARTHUR

[*Catches his father's eye fixed on him contemptuously.*] Don't you speak to me. Don't you come near me. You have no right to be here. I didn't send for you. I'm free of you. Free. That's what I am.

HALE

[*Goes to the other side of him.*] Now what's the use——

ARTHUR

Oh, let me be!

CARLTON

I didn't want to come, believe me. Your father-in-law thought it would be a pleasant little surprise for you.

HALE

Yes, I did. And——

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ARTHUR

[*Screaming.*] Pleasant? There's never been a moment in all my life it's been pleasant to see you. [*To others.*] My father! Brought me into the world—then let me shift for myself. And this is what he's made of me! This! I hate the sight of you. Everything about you. By God—I'd like to smash you! Smash you!

[*Rushes at him.* MARIAN *gets between them; he suddenly staggers; she drags a chair from near her; he falls into it panting and holding his head in both of his hands.*]

MARIAN

Ned—Jim—— [*They go to her.*] Take him in there. [*Pointing to door.*]

[*The two men become almost sober. They go each side of* ARTHUR *and help him up.*]

JIM

Come along.

NED

You'll be all right.

JIM

Just lie down for a bit.

NED

Here we are.

JIM

All our fault.

[MARIAN *goes to the door of* ARTHUR'S *room and opens it. The two men help* ARTHUR *into the room —he goes without protest—in a state of collapse.*]

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JIM

[*To* MARIAN.] Don't worry. We'll manage.
[*Closes the door.*]

MARIAN

[*To* MADELEINE.] Stay with me tonight.

MADELEINE

All right, Marian.

MARIAN

[*To her father, indicating* CARLTON.] Take him away. I'll see you at the boat.

HALE

Don't be upset. Arthur's a little excited. And very natural. Hasn't he a perfect right to be? The night before? Sound as a bell after a few hours' sleep. Good-night. [*Pats* MARIAN'S *shoulder; she is standing somewhat dazed trying to collect her thoughts;* HALE *goes to* CARLTON.] Come on. Pity I brought you.

CARLTON

Pity I let you. [*Goes to* MARIAN.] Sorry I spoilt your party.

[MARIAN *makes a gesture for him to go. She is in distress. Both men go into the passage out of sight.*]

[MARIAN *left alone with* MADELEINE *gives way to the tension; shivers, sobs, then breaks down and cries.* MADELEINE *takes her in her arms and tries to quiet her; she chatters.*] It was terrible! Terrible! What am I going to do? What can I do?—You won't leave me?

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MADELEINE

No, dear. I'll stay with you.

MARIAN

I'm frightened. It's the first time he's done that—since we've been married. . . . He's like a different human being.—I'm frightened.

[NED *and* JIM *come in from* ARTHUR'S *room, closing the door softly.*]

JIM

[*To* MARIAN, *very quietly.*] He's asleep. We put him to bed. Nothing to worry about. . . . We're so sorry, Marian.

NED

Very, very sorry.—He'll be quite all right.—Often been like that with us.—Won't know a thing about it when he wakes up.

JIM

He'll be fine in the morning.

MARIAN

Please go back to the others. And—don't say anything.

JIM

Not a word.

NED

Sure.

JIM

I feel it is all our fault.

MARIAN

Please go in. I'll follow you—in a few minutes.

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JIM

All right. I *am* sorry.

NED

So am I. Very sorry, Marian.

[*They pass out and go into ball-room, the music rising as they open the doors and fading when they close it.*]

MADELEINE

Why don't you go to your room and let me make your excuses?

MARIAN

[*Wiping her eyes.*] No.—No.—I *must* go back. Bring me some powder. [*Pointing to door.*] In there. By the mirror.

[MADELEINE *starts to go.*] And the smelling-salts.

[MADELEINE *goes into room.*]

[MARIAN *goes to door of* ARTHUR'S *room and listens; opens it slightly, listens, then closes it; her eyes rest on the refreshment table; goes to it, finds a clean glass. Searches for a champagne bottle with some left in it; finds one; fills the glass, drinks, coughs, makes a wry face, drinks the remainder, just as* MADELEINE *re-enters and goes to her with smelling-salts and powder.* MARIAN *holds up the empty glass.*]

I may be up for hours.

[*Puts glass down, sniffs salts, powders her face, then with* MADELEINE *goes into ball-room; as she opens the doors the music swells and voices heard chanting.*]

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"In the morning, in the evening,
Ain't we got fun!"

[*The band crashes with every one of the wonderful instruments used in the delectable jazz dance in full play. The beat of the tom-toms, the blowing of whistles, the mocking of the laughing-horn—all unite in a pæan of glorification of modern joyousness.*]

"Oh! Ain't we got fun!"

END OF ACT II

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Act III: PARIS

A luxuriously-appointed sitting-room in a Parisian hotel. Faintly from the near-distance comes delicately into the room some new compositions for the modern ball-room, dance-hall and cabaret. The same taste in dance-music seems to prevail amid all classes attracted by the modern rhythmic movements in all civilized countries. The dance-hall is the one assembly where all meet on a common basis. How common is entirely point-o'-view.

Madeleine Trent *is standing near the mantelpiece, her eyes on some new photos of* Marian, *while her ears are titillated by the ubiquitous measures that float in from the tireless band.*

The telephone-bell rings in the room.

Madeleine *goes to it and takes off the receiver.*

MADELEINE

Hello—Hello. Are you there? Yes. . . . yes. . . . This is Mr. Carlton's room. . . . No. . . . They're not in. . . . Yes, I will. . . . Wait—I'll get a pencil. . . . [*Looks around, finds pencil and pad on writing desk. Takes up receiver.*] Yes—yes—Hello. . . . There's such a buzz . . . spell it please. . . . C-a-r-r-o-l—Tom Carrol? You, Tom? . . . This is Madeleine—Made-

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leine Trent. [*Laughs.*] I didn't recognize your voice either. There's such a buzzing. Where are you? Oh. Well, why not come up? DO. They can't be long now. They know I'm calling. Yes. All right.

[*Hangs up receiver; smiles with real pleasure, humming the distant dance-music and dancing to it. Surveys the room. Goes to piano and hums over the music and sings snatches of the songs she finds. Ring at door. She calls, "Come in.—Oh, wait. I don't know if it's open." Hurries to the door and opens it. Enter* TOM. *They greet each other warmly.*]

TOM

What are you doing here?

MADELEINE

Several of us came over to see the play at the Vaudeville. We fly back tomorrow.

TOM

You're still playing in London, I see.

MADELEINE

Yes. It looks like going on forever.

TOM

Isn't that splendid?

MADELEINE

And they're so nice to us.

TOM

Why shouldn't they be? Aren't we nice to them in New York?

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MADELEINE

They've done so much to make us feel at home. I love it.—What are you doing here?

TOM

Just business. I'm going to Brussels in the morning. I would have liked to have seen Marian—and Arthur—to say "good-bye."

MADELEINE

Haven't you seen them?

TOM

Not Arthur. He was never up when I called in the day, and always out when I called in the evening.

MADELEINE

Oh? [*Seriously.*]

TOM

Marian and I had lunch yesterday and looked at the shops afterwards—for awhile.

MADELEINE

How is she?

TOM

Quite well—I think.

MADELEINE

You *think?*

TOM

Oh, yes, quite well.

MADELEINE

And happy?

TOM

I suppose so.

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MADELEINE

That means she isn't?

TOM

Well . . . I don't think she is, altogether.

MADELEINE

I was afraid she wouldn't be.

TOM

They'd better have remained in the United States.

MADELEINE

I see. [*Nods understandingly.*] I have had a few letters from her. Quite incoherent. Nothing about herself—really. Nothing I wanted to know. Always promising to come to London. But she's not left Paris, has she?

TOM

No.

MADELEINE

Why do they stay here?

TOM

Her husband likes it.

MADELEINE

Out every night?

TOM

I guess so. Every night I've been here.

MADELEINE

What a shame! What a great shame!

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TOM

Yes. It is.

MADELEINE

[*Thinks.*] I adore Marian. You used to—didn't you?

TOM

[*Softly.*] Yes.

MADELEINE

And she was always talking of you.

[TOM *gets up and walks about.*]

[MADELEINE *goes to him; puts her arm thru his.*] You loved her?

TOM

Yes.

MADELEINE

And you do still?

TOM

[*Hoarsely after a pause.*] Yes—yes. I do. I do. I'd give the rest of my life if I could know she was out of here—back home. Anywhere, away from this cursed, damnable, destructive living Destructive bodily and mentally.

MADELEINE

Does she like it?

TOM

No. I'm sure she doesn't. Down in her soul she hates it. She must.—Oh, what's the use?

MADELEINE

Just drifts with Arthur?

TOM

That's it. Just drifts . . . with him.

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MADELEINE

No influence over him?

TOM

[*Shakes his head.*] No.

MADELEINE

I was afraid when they married.

TOM

I *knew*. I *knew!*

MADELEINE

Yet I always hoped she *might*——. He was so charming, so agreeable, so amusing—when he was himself.

TOM

That wasn't himself. His *real* self. His *real* self is sitting now in some den. Shouting to drown the racket . . . drinking to keep up his flagging spirits and dancing as tho that was the be-all and end-all of life. And Marian sits with him. God! What a wretched, wretched waste!

MADELEINE

Why doesn't she take him back to America? She'd have some chance there. She has none here.

TOM

That's what I begged her to do when she was with me yesterday. I entreated her. But, no. "When *he* wants to," she said. "When *he* wants to." [*Stops in front of* MADELEINE.] Back in my mind I have a horrible fear. That she likes it! Doesn't want to go.

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MADELEINE

Oh, no.

TOM

It's in her blood. In her mind.

MADELEINE

It can never be in her soul, Tom. I know Marian.

TOM

How long can the soul last against contamination like this? It's such a waste. Such a waste. [*Sits with his hands clenched, his head lowered.*] Horrid! Brutal! Marian! Marian!

MADELEINE

[*Goes to him, puts her hand on his shoulder.*] Don't give up hope. I don't. Somehow I can't think of Marian as—as—— [*Breaks off.*]

TOM

That's it. Neither could I. Until yesterday. She's changed. Almost unrecognizable. Things she says—laughs at. In just a few months. That beast! That beast! I'd like to—— [*Under his breath.*] *Beast!*

MADELEINE

Ssh—Ssh—!

TOM

[*Abruptly.*] I'll go. If I met him I might—I might —— Better I don't. Say "Good-bye" to Marian for me—not before him. And do what you can, will you?

MADELEINE

Yes, Tom. I'll do what I can.

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TOM

[*Pressing his forehead.*] Seeing her has taken the heart out of me. I don't want to stay abroad. I want to go back. Creep away where no one knows me. Hide. [*Suddenly; fiercely.*] It wouldn't hurt so much if she were happy. But to see her smile with no light in her eyes: to hear her laugh with no music in her voice. [*Breaks off suddenly.*] Good-bye, Madeleine—I'll see you [*groping for door*] sometime——

[*As he opens the door the dance-music swells.*] Bah —that petty, damnable, insane—— [*Bangs door behind him; the music becomes fainter but is still quite distinct.*]

[MADELEINE *stands thinking. She is very much moved and distressed. She looks after him, then goes to writing desk, sits and starts to write a note when the outer door opens and shuts.* MARIAN *enters. She is more than a little intoxicated and gives way to mirthless laughter, crying, hysteria, anger, weakness as the moods strike her.*]

MARIAN

[*Staggers down to* MADELEINE.] Sorry I'm late. [*Kisses her.*] Couldn't get away. [*Throws off her cloak.*]

MADELEINE

[*Shocked at* MARIAN'S *changed appearance and her condition: faintly.*] Where's Arthur?

MARIAN

Don't know.

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MADELEINE

Oh?

MARIAN

Went off. Left me. Some of the others brought me back. We've had an awful row. Awful. He was just horrid. He shouted and bawled. Rushed away. Damn rotten of him.

[*Goes to table and pours herself a drink.*]

MADELEINE

[*Looking at her in horror and pity. She can hardly believe it's the same* MARIAN.] What did you quarrel about?

MARIAN

It's been coming. Had to be sometime. Can't keep the clip we've been going up *all the time.* Should say not. [*Drinks.*] I said I would come home *once.* Wanted to see you as much as anything. And I'm so tired of it. So tired. [*Sits back on couch.*] Hate the sight of them. Same faces every night. Same beastly, silly jokes. Same jazz. And all of us drunk. We can do that in New York. Why come to Paris? My head! It throbs and throbs. [*Closes her eyes.*]

[MADELEINE *goes to her and puts her hand on her forehead.* MARIAN *opens her eyes and smiles up at her.*]

Nice Madeleine. Cool Madeleine. Hand cool. Head cool. Life cool. Lucky Madeleine. [*Closes her eyes.*]

MADELEINE

Let me make you comfortable.

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MARIAN

No. Don't want to be comfortable. Just lie here for a bit. All right in a minute. If only my head would stop lifting up and down. Your head ever lift up and down? Of course not. Too cool. Nice Madeleine. What are you doing in Paris?

MADELEINE

I came to see the play at the Vaudeville.

MARIAN

Good?

MADELEINE

Very funny. But why always the same? Three acts of undiluted nastiness. Why?

MARIAN

So much of it all around, I suppose. Always have a few plays like that in New York. We *are* nasty. Enough of us. So they write plays for us. You wouldn't play in 'em?

MADELEINE

No. I'd rather give up the theatre.

MARIAN

Sure. Anything in that glass?

MADELEINE

Don't you think——?

MARIAN

No, I don't. [*Sharply; gets up; fills glass.*]

MADELEINE

Marian!

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MARIAN

It's all right. I'm all upset. Can't bear being shouted at and abused—and—— [*Drinks.*] Had supper?

MADELEINE

I'm going to presently.

MARIAN

Have it here.

MADELEINE

They're waiting for me in the restaurant downstairs.

MARIAN

Who are?

MADELEINE

The manager and the author of the play.

MARIAN

Cut them out and stay with me.

MADELEINE

I can't very well do that.

MARIAN

Why not?

MADELEINE

I came over with them.

MARIAN

Don't make any difference.

MADELEINE

Now let me loosen you.

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MARIAN

I don't want to be loosened. And I don't want to be left alone. You've got to stay, Madeleine.

MADELEINE

I can't. Really, I can't.

MARIAN

Why not?

MADELEINE

They brought me.

MARIAN

They see you every day. First time I've seen you since I left New York. [*Laughs foolishly.*] Seems about ten years ago—since left N'york. Ten years.—Loved it at first. Hate it now. Wish I was back.

MADELEINE

Why don't you go back?

MARIAN

Arthur won't. Wanted him to tonight. Swore at me—in public. Nice, wasn't it? Swore!

MADELEINE

How long will you let him go on like that?

MARIAN

Let him? I have no influence over him. Does as he likes.

MADELEINE

Oh, Marian! Marian!

MARIAN

What?

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MADELEINE

I hoped everything would be so different.

MARIAN

Did ye? Suppose ye did. Well, it isn't. [*Thinking; chuckling to herself.*] I was going to reform him. Only drink now and again—when he wanted to—like father. Well, he does. Not like father, though. Arthur *wants* it all the time. Takes it, too. He's reformed me. Someone had to be reformed. It's *me.* [*Finishes glass. The music rises: she dances to it.*] Arthur's idea. Took our suite near the private dancing-rooms. Have a dance there most every night. We generally drop in before we turn in if we know who's giving it. Don't seem so bad when you're wobbling about. Can't think while you're doing it—or *feel.* [*Sings.*]

"In the morning, in the evening,
Ain't we got fun."

[*Suddenly breaks off and sinks on couch: glass slips from her fingers; she presses her head.*] Oh!

MADELEINE

[*Takes up glass. Puts it on table. Takes* MARIAN'S *hands.*] Lie back, dear. Relax.

MARIAN

I wish my head would stop. Do you know, Madeliine, the louder the band plays the sadder I get. I feel as tho I were stretched on a cross. . . . Don't leave me, Madeleine.

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MADELEINE

I must.

MARIAN

I thought we were friends.

MADELEINE

We are.

MARIAN

Wouldn't think it. You go away and leave me to myself. Fine friend. Put the others before me.

MADELEINE

I'm their guest, Marian. Do be reasonable.

MARIAN

I don't want to be alone. [*Shivers.*] I got the horrors. He glared at me tonight as tho he'd like to kill me. Let him. What a muck! Won't they laugh at me back home! I was going to do so much. Hell of a lot I've done. Ha! [*Closes her eyes; mutters; opens them. Looks at* MADELEINE *first with both eyes, then with one.*] You do look funny standing there—so solemn. Don't look so solemn. Makes you look old. Not the same bright, happy Madeleine, up to any mischief. You're not the same. I'm not either. Am I?

MADELEINE

No, Marian, you're not.

MARIAN

Don't like me so much as you did. Do you?

MADELEINE

[*Impulsively kneels down beside* MARIAN *and puts her arms around her.*] Every bit as much, Marian. Every

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bit. But you make me ache. Oh, Marian, throw it all up. Go back. This will only be a wretched dream. A nightmare. You'll wake out of it. Don't let this city beat you. Don't let it. Throw it off. Go back. I *do* like you just as much. Go back, Marian.

MARIAN

He wouldn't.

MADELEINE

Then go back alone. He'll follow you.

MARIAN

He wouldn't.

MADELEINE

Go back anyway.

MARIAN

Don't want to leave him. Get laughed at. Everybody laugh at me. No. Couldn't stand that.

MADELEINE

What if they did? What does it matter?

MARIAN

Couldn't stand it.

MADELEINE

You'd bring him to his senses if you left him.

MARIAN

No, I wouldn't. They're all muddled. Never draws a sober breath now. Never.

MADELEINE

If only you hadn't come here.

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MARIAN

Wish to God I hadn't. My fault. Too sure of myself. He'd have gone anywhere I wanted him to then. Loved me, then. Now he'll do nothing I want. Hates me. [*Suddenly breaks down and cries.*] Oh, I'm so unhappy. So miserable. [*Clings to her.*] Don't leave me, Madeleine. Don't leave me.

MADELEINE

I wish I didn't have to, but I must. Come, let me put you to bed.

MARIAN

[*Shivers and cries.*] I don't want to be put to bed.

MADELEINE

I'll come around the first thing in the morning.

MARIAN

Don't you dare. That's the only time I sleep. Can't sleep when it's dark. When the sun comes streaming in I sleep for hours. Hours. Half the day.
[MADELEINE *rises.*] Going?

MADELEINE

I must.

MARIAN

All right. [*Sullenly.*]

MADELEINE

I'll just stay awhile and come back.

MARIAN

You needn't.

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MADELEINE

That's what I'll do. Put in an appearance, make an excuse and come back. I'll stay then as long as you want me to.

MARIAN

Leave me now in all this and I never want to see you again.

MADELEINE

Just close your eyes and rest, and I'll be back before you have time to miss me.

MARIAN

Miss you? *I* won't miss you. Go back to your friends and don't come near me again.

MADELEINE

[*Goes to door—opens it—the music swells.*] I won't be long. You'll see.

MARIAN

Madeleine! Are you going to put me to bed?

MADELEINE

Why, of course. [*Closes door. Goes to her.*]

MARIAN

No. Changed my mind. I'll stay here. You *will* come back?

MADELEINE

[*Joyfully putting her arm around her.*] In just a few minutes. Now come.

MARIAN

Let me alone. [*Goes to couch.*] You won't come back if there's any fun. I know people now. All right.

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Stay and have it. [*Her eyes rest on the bottles.*] I'll have my own. [*Staggers to the table and takes up glass.*]

MADELEINE

No, Marian. No more. [MARIAN *glares at her.*] It's so bad for your head.

MARIAN

You think I'm drunk, don't you?

MADELEINE

[*In distress.*] Oh, my dear!

MARIAN

Well, I am. Every bit of me except the part I want to stupify. [*Presses her hand on her forehead.*] It *aches* but it *lives*—My eyes won't focus. My feet won't obey me. But my brain throbs on in a sober panic. . . . It's terrible not to be able to stop thinking.

MADELEINE

Come. Lie down. [*Helps* MARIAN *to couch.*]

MARIAN

[*Sinks onto couch and lies back.*] My nerves seem strung on little hot wires. [*Closes her eyes.*]

MADELEINE

[*Strokes* MARIAN'S *temples.*] Tom was here.

MARIAN

Tom? When?

MADELEINE

Just before you came in.

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MARIAN

Why didn't he wait?

MADELEINE

He did. As long as he could. He's off early in the morning. He asked me to say "Good-bye" for him.

MARIAN

I wish he'd waited. I'd have liked to see Tom.

MADELEINE

[*Continues to soothe* MARIAN *until she sleeps; then bends down and kisses her; creeps quickly to door, opens it and goes out, closing it quickly after her. The blare of the music screams into the room as the door opens:* MARIAN *springs up, stands distractedly, swaying backward and forward, bewildered; mutters to herself: then goes to the phone; takes off the receiver.*] I want the Hotel Crillon—Crillon!——

[*Waits, nods her head and sways her body to the music.*] Is that the Crillon?—Is it? Oh—I want to speak to Mr. Carrol—Mr. Tom Carrol. T-O-M—C-a-rrol! That's what I said. All right.—Please.

[*Waits again, the music swells and she nods and moves to it.*] Hello! That you, Tom? Marian! Yes. Why didn't you wait? But—why *didn't* you? Just after you went. The moment after. No—she's gone. She's left me. Yes. I don't know. The people she came with. No. I'm all alone. And I'm so wretched. Yes, I am. Everything's all wrong, Tom. Yes, it is. Got up and left me. I don't know where he's gone. I didn't want to stay out tonight. I wanted to go home.

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I knew Madeleine was coming. And I thought *you* might. Yes. I wish you'd waited. I'm most unhappy. I know. He's horrid to me now. What can I do? Oh, but you know, how could I? Madeleine's been saying that. But it would look so cowardly running away. Yes, it would. Oh, yes, it would. It's my fault—my fault entirely. Has been from the first. Yes, it has. I thought I could make something of him. Yes, I did. He's made something of me. Yes, he has. I know. I saw it in your face yesterday. Yes, I did. I felt it in the way you spoke to me. Yes, I did. You seemed ashamed of me. Yes, you did. And I feel ashamed of myself. Always ashamed now. Yes, I am. [*Looking at bottles.*] Quite a good deal. Yes, I have. And I'm going to have more. Then I don't feel so miserable. I'm so wretched now I could kill myself. Yes, I could. I've got the horrors to-night. All alone. Yes. And my head. It's spinning. The worry and misery of everything. No! No! *No!* I can't! I'd just be awake staring at nothing. Thinking. Regretting things. Serves me right. I've treated everyone badly for him. Yes, I have. I treated you dreadfully. Yes, I did. I didn't know *how* badly until yesterday. You looked so sorry for me. And so ashamed for me. I could have cried. [*Her voice begins to break; tears come in her eyes.*] You don't know how I felt seeing you. I hate the people I'm going with. I do. Hate them. And they hate me. Yes, they do. Arthur hates me. Yes, he does. [*Crying bitterly.*] I wish I were dead. If this goes on I'll kill myself—really I will. I've got to such

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a state now that if I see Arthur looking at me as he did to-night I'll—I'll——

[ARTHUR *bursts into the room: his left hand is bandaged in black.*]

MARIAN

[*She gives a cry.*] *Oh!*

[*Hangs up the receiver.*]

ARTHUR

[*In an ugly drunken mood.*] Who are you talking to? [*Bangs the door and stands glaring unsteadily at her.*]

MARIAN

Tom.

ARTHUR

What were you saying about me?—I heard my name. —What were you saying?

MARIAN

Telling him how you treated me tonight.

ARTHUR

Oh, were you? What business is it of his? [*She walks away, crying.*] Lunched with him yesterday, didn't you?

MARIAN

Yes, I did. [*Sinks back onto couch.*]

ARTHUR

I know you did. The Hayes saw you and told me. Why didn't *you* tell me?

MARIAN

I didn't think to.

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ARTHUR

What?

MARIAN

I didn't think of it.

ARTHUR

Don't have him around because I won't stand for it. See?

MARIAN

He's going away tomorrow.

ARTHUR

That's all right. Let him stay away.

MARIAN

All right.

ARTHUR

Sorry you didn't marry him. Ain't you?

MARIAN

He wouldn't treat me the way you have.

ARTHUR

I'm sorry you didn't, too, if it comes to that. Always making a fuss. I've given you a good time. Haven't I? What are you kicking about? My friends not good enough for you. Everything I do wrong. I'm sick of it. Sick of it. I'm going to do as I like. D'ye hear? Just as I like.

MARIAN

Don't—don't shout at me, Arthur. You've always done as you liked.

ARTHUR

And I'm going to keep on doing it. See? What's the matter with staying out tonight? You've done it

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before. Why make a grand-stand play about tonight in front of my friends?

MARIAN

I wanted to see Madeleine. She's been here. And I don't feel well. My head aches so.

ARTHUR

You drink too much, that's what the matter with you. You mix everything.—Stop it. D'ye hear? Make an old woman of you.

MARIAN

All right. Let us both stop it. Shall we, Arthur? *I* will. Will *you?*

ARTHUR

No, I won't.—I'm used to it.—Don't hurt me. . . . But *you*——*!* A couple of glasses and you laugh and cry like a crazy woman.—Cut it out. . . . Not before my friends. Made me sick tonight the way ye carried on.—Crying as tho I beat you. If ye don't like my friends stay home.—Good job, too.

MARIAN

[*Anxious to conciliate him.*] All right, Arthur. I won't make a fuss again. . . . Sorry I did tonight. . . . But I did feel very badly.—I do now. I suppose it *is* because I mix things. I'll stop. . . . And I won't ask you to. I'll never ask you *not* to do anything again. Everything you do will be right if only you will take me back to America. . . . Please take me back to America.

ARTHUR

When I'm good and ready.

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MARIAN

[*Shivering in terror.*] No.—*Now.* As soon as you can get a passage. *Now!* There's something evil here. In the way we live. It's evil. Do let us go back to our old jolly life where we laughed and played and loved each other. Will you?—You don't love me—now. Do you?

ARTHUR

No, I don't. And it's your own fault.

MARIAN

Perhaps it is.—I'm sure it is.—But give me a chance. —Away from all this. . . . Your love will come back. . . . I can't look my best or be my best in this kind of life. I can't. . . . I'm unhappy all the time.—Take me back. . . . We'll have good times again.—And we'll forget all this. . . . We'll be just as we used to be, Arthur. . . . It's as tho some hideous thing has come between us. . . . You were so nice to me until we came here. . . . Now we hardly see each other—except with a lot of people.

ARTHUR

They're my friends. And I like them. If *you* don't you can stay away.

MARIAN

Don't say those things. . . . Don't speak to me so roughly. . . . Oh—my head hurts so—I can't say just what I want to. . . . But I feel somehow as tho I were pleading for my life. . . . Because—because—*I can't go on living like this!* . . . I'd rather end it. I'd rather end it. I'd rather *end* it. [*Cries bitterly.*]

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ARTHUR

That's champagne-and-whiskey talking. . . . Make anyone feel like that. You stick to one or the other. . . . Or *nothing*. That's the best for you. . . . *Nothing*.

MARIAN

[*She shudders at his utter callousness. Then after a few minutes.*] You won't take me back to America?

ARTHUR

When I feel like it. I don't now.

MARIAN

All right. I don't know what is going to happen to me. [*Sinks back on couch.*] The whole world is tumbling around me. [*Closes her eyes.*]

ARTHUR

Go back to America! Not me. Just when I'm settled here. Know the right people. . . . It's a wonderful city—Paris. New York's a village compared to it. Lot of tough hicks. . . . Here you can see real life. . . . Don't care if I never see New York again. . . . What they think is enjoying themselves! . . . No wonder they laugh at us. . . . Sneaking our drinks in public. Boasting about it in private. . . . Can't talk to a fellow five minutes before he begins bragging about what liquor he's got and what he's going to get. . . . I was the same. . . . Hicks, that's what we are. Here they drink like gentlemen and never say a word about it. . . . Part of their lives. . . . This country isn't run by a lot of

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old women in trousers telling you what you should and what you shouldn't do. . . . Here they live free and open and are glad to see you. . . . Good times! . . . *We* don't know what they mean. Damned lot of hypocrites we are. . . . Never knew what fine living was until I came here. . . . Look thru the streets of Paris! Is there a "don't"-sign anywhere? . . . Greatest people on earth the French. Give me Paris every time. I'd like to live and die here. So just make up your mind to that. We're not going home—*yet.* See?

MARIAN

[*Dully.*] All right. Don't shout at me.

ARTHUR

So make the best of it. . . . Stick to a glass or two of champagne and be satisfied. . . . Cut out the hard stuff. You haven't got the head for it. . . . Then you'll be all right. . . . And don't be so stand-off-ish with my friends. Get to know 'em real well and you'll be crazy about 'em. . . . You used to like a bit of fun.

MARIAN

[*Shudders.*] Not *this* kind. . . . I never knew it—until I came here.

ARTHUR

And you never will after you get back home. So what the hell! . . . Do as the others do. . . . Don't hurt anyone. . . . Not *married* people. . . . Now put on your wrap. The car's outside. I came back for some money. . . . Didn't intend asking you again. But it's

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all right now. . . . I'll forget it. . . . Come along. We'll fix up your head at a drug-store. . . . And for God's sake don't cry all over the place. . . . It's all right. . . . Now. . . . Come on.

MARIAN

No. I'm not going out.

ARTHUR

Oh, ye're not?

MARIAN

No. And I'm not going to meet those people again. Every night we go to a noisier, dirtier place. Every week your friends get worse.

ARTHUR

What's that?

MARIAN

I've done everything you wanted me to. I've lost my looks, my spirit, but not quite lost my decency. . . . I am not going with you to those places again. . . . I'm going back home on the first steamer.

ARTHUR

You mean that?

MARIAN

Yes. I'll see about it tomorrow.

ARTHUR

Suits me.

MARIAN

You can follow me when that suits you.

ARTHUR

Bet your life I won't until it does.

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MARIAN

So. . . . This is what our marriage has come to?

ARTHUR

Whose fault is it?

MARIAN

Mine, I suppose.

ARTHUR

Bet your life it is. You knew what *I* was like. I made no pretense. Did I?

MARIAN

No. But I—thought—it—would—be—different. . . . So different.

ARTHUR

That's the trouble with women—always want something different. Never satisfied with people or things as they are. . . . *You* couldn't make *me* over, you know.

MARIAN

I see that now.

ARTHUR

No one can. . . . No fear. . . . Make *me* over! . . . *Why?* I was good enough to marry as I *was*. Why aren't I good enough now? I'm no different. It's *you* have changed. . . . I married a nice, *sober* girl. What are you now? *I'm* the man you married. *You're* not the *girl* I did. . . . You could have gone my way and everything'd have been fine. . . . But no one's going to interfere with me. I won't have it. See? *You* can't.

MARIAN

[*Hurt to the quick; realizes the whole thing is hopeless.*] Your father knew you better than I did. . . . If

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I had ever dreamed you could have spoken to me the way you have nothing would have induced me to marry you. . . . I only knew the side you showed me. And I loved it.—I wanted to keep the best side of you uppermost. But I wasn't strong enough. You didn't love me well enough.—So it's come to this—this—— [*Rather than let him see her cry she goes into the next room saying as she goes.*] It doesn't matter whose fault it is. That is the least thing to consider—whose fault it is. It's all so wrong. [*Passes third door.*] So very, very wrong.

[*The door slips from her fingers and bangs noisily.*]

[ARTHUR *watches her go out; gives a contemptuous laugh. Goes over to table, takes up glass* MARIAN *has used, smells it, gives an ejaculation of disgust, throws what is left in it on the carpet—pours out a drink—drinks it—puts glass back. Goes to writing desk, takes out keys—unlocks a drawer, takes out a wad of French paper-money—stuffs it in his pocket. The bell rings continuously at the outer door. He locks the drawer and goes unsteadily to the door. Throws it open.*]

TOM

[*Enters—breathlessly; anxiously.*] Marian? She's all right?

ARTHUR

All right? Of course she is.

TOM

[*Relieved.*] Thank God!

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ARTHUR

All right? What do you mean?

TOM

She phoned me just now. She seemed upset. I—was —afraid—— [*Stops.*]

ARTHUR

That so?

TOM

However you say she's——?

ARTHUR

I don't see what it has to do with you *how* my wife is.

TOM

I don't suppose you do.

ARTHUR

No, I don't. What business have you got coming here at this time of night?

TOM

I came because I thought your wife was in danger. . . . Grave danger.

ARTHUR

Did ye? What of?

TOM

When she phoned me she was in great distress. She seemed out of hand. Before I could reason with her she gave a cry and cut off.

ARTHUR

That's when I came in.

TOM

I see. . . . I'm sorry I disturbed you.

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ARTHUR

So am I. And I don't want you to disturb my wife either. We're not in America now—understand? We're thru with that riff-raff. See? And I don't want her reminded of it. See? [*Shaking his clenched hand in* TOM'S *face.*]

TOM

[*Closes the doors and walks into the room in front of* ARTHUR.] Come here.

[ARTHUR *staggers down and faces him.*]

I came here as I would to save *any* human being, from doing a rash, terrible thing. And I warn you if Marian *does* her death will be at your door.

ARTHUR

At my door? Damned cheek! [*Goes to table and lifts up decanter.*] This is the cause of her whining! *This.* She's drunk—that's what she is.

TOM

[*Stunned—: slowly.*] I don't believe it.

ARTHUR

Call me a liar?

TOM

I don't believe it.

ARTHUR

Call me a liar and I'll punch your head.

TOM

Oh, no, you won't. . . . But if you say Marian's drunk you're either a liar or a blackguard. Because if she *is* drunk it's you who are responsible. . . . Admit you're a liar and let it go at that.

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[*With a snarl* ARTHUR *rushes at him*—TOM *quickly and quietly raises his cane and levels it at* ARTHUR, *moving round in a circle.*]

TOM

Don't come too near. . . . I've seen a man lose an eye this way. . . . You deserve a good beating. . . . I wouldn't *fight* a rat like you . . .. I'd beat you. . . . Keep your hands up a minute or two longer and I will. Drop them! Do you hear? *Drop* them!

[*Suddenly turns the cane so that the heavily-mounted head of it is raised directly above* ARTHUR'S *head, ready to fall.* ARTHUR *quails; his hands drop; he staggers back.*]

Sit down *there*. . . . Don't *reel* about. [ARTHUR *drops into seat—cowed.*] Now try and get this into your muddled brain. . . . You take Marian back to her people, if you haven't the common manliness to take care of her. . . . Don't make a mess of her life. I'm going away tomorrow for three days. If, by the time I come back, you have made no effort to care for your wife's wishes, I'll cable her father to come over. More than that I'll go to the American consul here and put the whole case before him. If her husband won't protect her I'll see that some person does until her father comes. . . .

[MARIAN *enters in negligée; she looks very ill. Her eyes tear-stained—her voice dull as if in pain.*]

MARIAN

Tom! Nice of you to come. . . . I feel very ill.

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Very ill. My head will drive me mad. Shall I take another of these? I took one a little while ago. . . . I'm no better. I can't read it very well. My eyes are burning so. And the print is so small. [*Hands him a small phial.*]

TOM

[*Takes it; reads; becomes quite rigid.*] You *took* one of *these?*

MARIAN

Yes.

TOM

When?

MARIAN

About ten minutes ago. . . . Perhaps a quarter of an hour.

TOM

Arthur! [*With a cry.*] Look!

[*Thrusts the phial into his hand and goes to the phone. Keeps ringing several times, then unhooks and waits.* ARTHUR *rises and reads the label under a lamp. Turns and looks at* MARIAN: *passes his hand over his forehead. At last the connection is made and* TOM *speaks breathlessly into the phone.*] Is there a doctor in the hotel? . . . A *doctor?* . . . Isn't there any other? . . . Send for one. Quickly. Tell him it's for someone who has taken poison! Poison! For God's sake, hurry.

[MARIAN *gives a cry:* "ARTHUR!" *and goes to him.*]

ARTHUR

Taken one?

[*Putting his hand gently on her forehead.*]

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MARIAN

Yes. Isn't it for a headache?

ARTHUR

[*Dully to* TOM.] No doctor?

TOM

[*Taking the phial from* ARTHUR.] He's out. They're sending for one.

ARTHUR

My car. . . . Outside—I'll go—I know the best—Rue de Richelieu.

[*Swings door open*—MADELEINE *appears at door.* ARTHUR *rushes past her.*]

Go in! Marian's——

[*Disappears.*]

MARIAN

[*Dazed.*] Poison? Oh, no. Is it? *Poison?* . . . Not *those* . . . [*Gives a long low moan.*] Oh-h-h! I'm afraid! I'm afraid!

[*Shivers violently;* TOM *goes one side of her,* MADELEINE *the other and they lead her to the couch, chattering and shivering.*]

MADELEINE

What is it? What has happened?

[TOM *warns her not to alarm* MARIAN. *Hands her the phial.*]

[MADELEINE *looks at the phial horror-stricken.*] How many did she take?

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TOM

One. Fifteen minutes ago. Arthur's gone for a doctor.

MADELEINE

Get milk. . . . At once—*Milk.*

[TOM *goes to the phone.*]

No, no. Go down for it. *Hurry.* . . . Go *down!*

[TOM *rushes out.*]

MARIAN

What have I done? What have I done? [*Crying with fear.*]

MADELEINE

Don't. Don't. [*Smoothing cushions.*] Lie back, dear. The doctor will be here. You'll be all right when he comes.

MARIAN

Oh, Madeleine! I don't want to die! I'm afraid to die! [*Clinging to her.*] Don't let me die!

[*The curtain falls with* MARIAN *in a state of extreme terror and* MADELEINE *trying to soothe her, their voices over-lapping for seconds after the curtain falls. In from the adjoining room crashes the motif from "Madame Butterfly" in its artistic jazz setting.*]

END OF ACT III

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ACT IV: THE AFTERNOON OF THE TENTH DAY

The same. Afternoon of the tenth day.
When the curtain rises MADELEINE *is discovered packing books, framed photographs, etc., which she collects from the piano and the various tables.*
TOM *is sitting, head in hands, staring out into the future.*

MADELEINE

How many hours' sleep have you had during the last ten days?

TOM

[*Wearily.*] I don't know. . . . I don't know. . . . If the doctor says Marian will live I'll sleep all right. Sleep sound. . . . If he tells me she'll——

MADELEINE

Why not go to your hotel and rest?

TOM

No. I want to hear the doctor's opinion. . . . He should know today. . . . He *said* he'd know today. . . . What have you done with Arthur's things?

MADELEINE

I've sealed up his papers.

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TOM

For his father?

MADELEINE

Yes, if he wants them.

TOM

Fancy lying in there for ten days. . . . Wondering—torturing herself. . . . God! What she must have gone thru. Is still.

[*Suddenly thru the open windows come the braying discord of a jazz-band from the tea-room below. With an ejaculation of anger* TOM *closes the window.*]

MADELEINE

Don't do that, Tom. It's so hot. [*Opens the windows despite* TOM'S *effort to prevent her.*] It's breathless.

TOM

They can't even drink their tea without that racket. I hate it. [*Contracts his shoulders.*]

MADELEINE

[*Proceeding to pack as before.*] Put up with it, Tom. It's suffocating.

TOM

But, Marian?

MADELEINE

She's two rooms away. I've closed both doors. She can't hear it.

[*Telephone bell rings.* TOM *starts up, expectantly.* MADELEINE *goes to the phone.*]

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MADELEINE

[*At 'phone.*] Yes. . . . Yes. . . . Oh! How are you? . . . I'm so glad. . . . Yes, do. . . . Come right up. [*Hangs up receiver.*] They're here. . . . [*Gets his hat, etc., goes to him solicitously.*] I'll let you know the moment the doctor goes.

TOM

No. . . . I'll avoid them. . . . I'll wait downstairs. I'll come up with the doctor. [*Going quickly to door.*]

MADELEINE

You'd much better go to your hotel and rest comfortably until I call you.

TOM

I couldn't, Madeleine. I couldn't. . . . I'll just—just—— [*Goes out.*]

[MADELEINE *quickly puts articles into the dressing case and closes it. Door-bell rings.* MADELEINE *opens it, revealing* HALE *and* CARLTON. *They are in traveling clothes, light overcoat over arm.*]

MADELEINE

[*Shaking* HALE *by the hand, warmly, and bringing him into the room.*] Oh, I'm so glad. She's been expecting you. How do you do, Mr. Carlton?

HALE

[*Eagerly, anxiously.*] How is she?

[CARLTON *follows in, closing the door.*]

MADELEINE

Very much better.

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HALE

She *is*?

MADELEINE

Very much—the last two days.

HALE

Will she be—be all right? . . . Tell me. . . . Don't be afraid.

MADELEINE

I'm sure she will be.

HALE

[*Hands on her shoulders, looking straight into her eyes.*] Don't say that if you don't think it.

MADELEINE

I *do* think it.

HALE

[*Wearily passing his hand across his forehead.*] I don't know what I'd do, Madeleine. . . . I don't know —what I'd do. [*His hand comes down over his eyes.*]

MADELEINE

Come in to her. She's a little depressed and weak, so don't *sympathize*. [*Smiles at him and holds up a warning finger.*] Be surprised she's looking so well. Say she doesn't seem to be ill the least little bit. Make her laugh, but not too much. Be just as you used to be. Come on.

HALE

[*Nervously, stopping her opening the door.*] Has she changed much?

MADELEINE

[*Nods.*] Yes. Quite a good deal. . . . But you mustn't notice it.

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HALE

I won't. I won't. . . . I'll be cheerful. . . . Yes, I will. [*His hand on* MADELEINE'S *arm, pleadingly.*] She'll *live?*

MADELEINE

Yes. *I* believe it. *You* must. *She* must. . . . Make her.

HALE

All right.

MADELEINE

[*Remembering.*] And another thing. Avoid talking about Arthur. She doesn't know he's dead. She thinks he was hurt—seriously hurt. That he is recovering. She is looking forward to seeing him.

HALE

Why didn't you tell her?

MADELEINE

The doctor wouldn't let me.

HALE

[*To* CARLTON.] You hear that?

CARLTON

Yes.

HALE

When can she be told?

MADELEINE

As soon as she is out of danger.

HALE

Then she's not out of danger yet?

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MADELEINE

I think she is. I *know* she is. But the doctor will take no chance of making a mistake. He put ten days as the outside limit. This is the afternoon of the tenth day. . . . He'll be here in a few minutes.

HALE

[*Trembles, tries to speak.*] If he—— [*Stops.*]

MADELEINE

Don't think that. [*Opens door, goes out, opens door of* MARIAN'S *room.*] Guess who I've brought you?

MARIAN

[*Faintly, from within.*] Father! Has he come, Madeleine?

HALE

[*Heartily, as he goes in.*] Sure I have. Well, well, well! Why, you look fine! Not a bit as if you'd been sick. [*Laughing cheerily.*] Why, you look *great!*

[MADELEINE *closes the door of* MARIAN'S *room, re-enters and closes the door: moves into the room.*]

MADELEINE

Sit down, Mr. Carlton.

CARLTON

[*Throws his hat and coat on a chair.*] I'd rather move about, if ye don't mind. [*Looks around the room.*] This is where they lived?

MADELEINE

Yes.

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CARLTON

[*Listens to the faint sound of the dance-music.*] Got it right here. Close and handy.

MADELEINE

She can't hear it. Besides, we're moving her out of here today. She's not been well enough before.

CARLTON

[*Stops: faces her.*] How is she? . . . Really?

MADELEINE

Very weak. Very unhappy. But I have hope. She's so much better than she was. So—much—better. [*Shivers and sighs.*]

CARLTON

Been as bad as that?

MADELEINE

Yes.

CARLTON

Poison?

MADELEINE

Yes.

CARLTON

Her father didn't tell me much. . . . *Accident?*

MADELEINE

Yes.

CARLTON

[*Sharply.*] *Was* it?

MADELEINE

Yes, it was.

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CARLTON

[*Severely.*] You're telling me the truth?

MADELEINE

Mr. Carlton!

CARLTON

I see you are. . . . I'm mighty glad. . . . I couldn't get it out of my mind he'd driven her to it.

MADELEINE

[*Shaking her head decisively.*] No.

CARLTON

Were you here at the time?

MADELEINE

I came just after she'd taken it.

CARLTON

Tell me. . . . Go on.

MADELEINE

Her head ached. She went into her room and, by mistake, took a bichloride-of-mercury tablet.

CARLTON

[*Shrewdly, suspiciously.*] What was she doing with that stuff?

MADELEINE

Arthur had injured his hand. She used it as a dressing for the cut.

CARLTON

Cut his hand, eh? Fighting?

MADELEINE

A bottle burst.

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CARLTON

Sure. One or the other. Did ye see him—*afterwards?*

MADELEINE

Once. He didn't know me. He was never really conscious at any time.

CARLTON

Drunk when it happened, eh?

MADELEINE

No. He was rushing out for a doctor for Marian as I came in. . . . He was nervous, shaken, frightened. His car was waiting for him. He drove it to the doctor's house. Just as he was turning the corner of the Rue de Richelieu he smashed into a car. It was not altogether his fault. The man was on the wrong side. Gave no warning. He was killed too.

CARLTON

I know. It was in the papers.

MADELEINE

In New York?

CARLTON

All over. Oh, yes. It was in the papers. I've had a good deal of sympathy. Quite a good deal. An editorial or two. A few *sermons*. And quite a boost to the reformers. Quite a boost. And they made the most of it. I must grant them that. They made a fine job of it. He did a lot of good getting out the way he did. . . . More, I guess, than he ever did while he was alive. [*She looks at him a moment in surprise and disgust and turns*

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away.] Not used to hear a father talk about a dead son that way, are you?

MADELEINE

No, Mr. Carlton, I'm not.

CARLTON

Did ye know him well?

MADELEINE

Yes.

CARLTON

Very well?

MADELEINE

Very.

CARLTON

Oh. Well, then, you must know what I mean. Course you must. . . . Fine young fella. Strapping. Full of health and strength. Just used it up all wrong. That's all was the matter with him. Used it up wrong. Bound to come smash. If not the way he *did,* some other. . . . Life's too cheap to that kind. . . . Say, if we could get the combined energy our young men use up on golf, tennis, polo, automobiles and jazz turned into *producing* something, *what* a country we'd have! No unemployed. Houses for everyone. No one discontented. The wheel spinning round full swing twenty-four hours a day. . . . There ye are! They'd be ashamed to do anything useful. Arthur was. . . . Well, he saw Paris and *died.* That's all there is to *that.*

MADELEINE

Please don't talk about him before Marian.

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CARLTON

Of course I won't. Not a word. I might have spared your feelings, too. I wish I had.

MADELEINE

Oh, it doesn't matter. It doesn't matter about me. But if she speaks of him—and she will—just remember he was badly hurt. That's all. Just badly hurt. That he's getting better.

CARLTON

Sure.

MADELEINE

It will be terrible telling her the truth when the time comes.

CARLTON

Terrible? Why? Does she *want* him to be alive?

MADELEINE

Yes, Mr. Carlton, she does.

CARLTON

[*Amazed.*] What d'ye know about that!

MADELEINE

She loved him, Mr. Carlton. Loves him still.

CARLTON

Does she indeed? Ye don't say? Still wants to cling on?

MADELEINE

That's why it will be so hard to tell her. So don't—don't——

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CARLTON

Sure I won't. . . . Still loves him. . . . After all these months. . . . That beats me. . . . Guess she's been pretty sick all right.

[*The outer door opens and voices are faintly heard.* MADELEINE *warns him with a gesture.* HALE *appears,* MARIAN *on his arm. She is very white and drawn, the dark clothing accentuating her unearthly pallor, and the wide-open, distended eyes.* CARLTON *straightens up as he looks at her, then goes to her and sympathetically holds out his hand.*]

CARLTON

Glad to find ye looking so strong. Mighty glad.

MARIAN

Have you seen Arthur?

CARLTON

No. Not yet. Came straight here—with him. [*Nodding to* HALE.]

MARIAN

Be kind to him, Mr. Carlton. They won't let me see him. Be kind to him.

CARLTON

Sure I will.

[*Goes the other side of her and with an attempt at gentleness assists her with* HALE, *to an armchair* MADELEINE *has arranged.*]

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MARIAN

[*Smiles gratefully up at* MADELEINE.] Hasn't the doctor come?

MADELEINE

He won't be long now.

MARIAN

It's the tenth day, Madeleine. The tenth. . . . I've counted them. . . . And they've gone *so* slowly. . . . He'll *know* today. He'll *know!* . . . I can't bear the waiting. . . . Why isn't he here? . . . It's cruel of him! . . . [*To* HALE.] For ten days I've thought only of *death*—*death*—or *life*. Which? . . . If death, how should I meet it? If life, what will I do with it? . . . *What?* . . . Day and night that thought has haunted me. . . . All day. All night. . . . Life? Death! . . . Last night I slept a little. My long waiting was going to end. I'd know soon. So I slept, and dreamt. Of Arthur. . . . He came to me white and drawn. He stood at the foot of my bed. And he pleaded with me—pleaded that I should *die*. . . . He said *he* had to go. I must go with him. . . . I entreated him to hold on to life. As I had. That it would mean so much more to us than it ever had because of the terror and pain we'd been through. I begged him not to die. We'd live cleaner, think better, for all we'd suffered. We *must* live. And he looked at me so sadly, so pityingly. "Poor Marian! Poor old Marian! Always making up fairy tales. We've done with *life*, Marian." And I woke, shivering. . . . And I prayed that I might live. That Arthur might live. [*Her eyes rest on* CARLTON.]

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You see, Mr. Carlton, for the first time in our lives Arthur and I have been forced to think. . . . We were cut down. . . . It must have been Fate beckoned me to take that poison and sent Arthur out into the night to save me. Fate! . . . It took us out of life, helpless. Just to lie for ten days and nights—thinking. . . . It took him in his strength and crushed him. . . . We've been separated—for a purpose. . . . We both see things differently now. . . . I will never be the same again. . . . Nor will Arthur. . . . We'll be "newly arisen" when we meet. . . . And life will be *so* different. So very, very different. . . . [*Thinking.*] *If* I live! Oh, where is the doctor? Why doesn't he come? I want to know! I want to know!

HALE

Come! Come! Marian! Where's your courage?

MARIAN

I haven't any. I'm afraid.

MADELEINE

Be quiet, dear.

MARIAN

[*Suddenly, clinging to* MADELEINE.] Do you think he *knows* and doesn't want to tell me? Is *that* why he doesn't come?

MADELEINE

Indeed it isn't. He's often a little late. You're not his only patient. He'd be here if——

[*The bell rings.* MARIAN *gives a cry.* MADELEINE

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goes to the door and opens it. TOM *comes in.* MARIAN *gives a faint ejaculation of pleasure on seeing him.*]

TOM

[*To* MADELEINE.] He's in the hall talking to some people.

[HALE *and* TOM *welcome each other warmly: both too moved to speak.* HALE *motions him to go to* MARIAN. *As* TOM *moves forward* CARLTON *intercepts him.*]

CARLTON

You the doctor?

[TOM *looks at him in amazement.*]

HALE

[*With forced heartiness, trying to laugh.*] No, John. This is Tom. Tom Carrol. Mr. Carlton.

[TOM *and* CARLTON *nod perfunctorily.*]

[*Taking* TOM *to* MARIAN.] My! She'll be glad to see you.

CARLTON

Sight gladder to see the doctor.

TOM

[*Taking* MARIAN'S *hand gently.*] Marian! [*He can say no more—just looks: the change in her strikes him dumb.*]

MARIAN

[*Smiling up at him.*] Nice of you to come, Tom. . . . I've heard. . . . He's been every day, father. . . . Every day.

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TOM

You're much better. Aren't you?

MARIAN

Yes, Tom. Anxious. That's all. Anxious. Tired of waiting.

TOM

He'll be here any moment now.

MARIAN

You shouldn't have come every day. Not *every* day, Tom.

TOM

I wanted to, Marian.

MARIAN

Dear Tom. . . . [*To* HALE.] He has been worrying Dr. Virande to call in specialists.

TOM

Why shouldn't he?

MARIAN

He *did*. The last one made me feel I'd get well—for a whole day.

TOM

He was right.

MADELEINE

Of course he was.

TOM

You will.

[*Bell rings sharply. All stop to look in direction of door.* MADELEINE *opens it softly and* DR. VIRANDE *comes quietly into the room. He is a slim, shrewd,*

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middle-aged man, dressed as a distinguished Parisian. He carries a small black bag.]

DR. VIRANDE

Ah! Bonjour! [*To* TOM, *turns to* MARIAN.] And 'ow is ma *petite* patient? What a colour! *Ma foi!* And the eye so bright! Dear, dear, dear! Well, well, well! [*As he opens the bag and takes out stethoscope and instrument for taking blood-pressure.*]

MADELEINE

[*Nodding toward the three men.*] Shall they go into the next room?

DR. VIRANDE

Mais non! Non! Make no difference! None at all. [*Taking* MARIAN'S *wrist and feeling her pulse: looks at watch. Perfect silence.* MARIAN *watches him with distended eyes. He closes watch with a snap.*] What 'ave you been doing? Your pulse "beat, beat, beat!" Your eyes "dance, dance, dance." Don't I tell you: "quiet, quiet, quiet? Reposé?" [*Listens with stethoscope: again* MARIAN *stares out into the future. He removes the stethoscope.*] "Jump, jump, jump!" What a heart! "Pump, pump, pump!" What a girl! To do what you tell her. [*To* MADELEINE.] And what a nurse to let her be all excitement! Why? But why? Don't I tell you keep 'er so? [*Makes gesture of perfect rest.*] And 'ere she is. "Bub, bub, bub." "Ha! ha! ha!" [*By this time he has fastened the blood-pressure instrument.*] Very naughty! You not deserve to

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get well! Naughty! [*To* Tom.] You make her this way?

TOM

[*Irritably.*] No!

DR. VIRANDE

Someone do. Ah! I know! You bring her another *specialist?* Eh?

TOM

[*Angrily.*] I didn't.

DR. VIRANDE

Not so loud, if you please. [*Takes off instrument: thinks. Removes his glasses and wipes them.*] All right. Very good. All finished.

MARIAN

[*With a cry.*] I'll *live?*

DR. VIRANDE

You will live.

MARIAN

Madeleine! Father! [*Cries as they go to her.*]

DR. VIRANDE

And now! What you *crying* about? But you should laugh!

MARIAN

[*Laughing and crying.*] I am, Doctor. I am.

DR. VIRANDE

You are very lucky. . . . Very. . . . And you should be very grateful.

MARIAN

I am. I can never thank you enough.

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DR. VIRANDE

Thank *me?* How foolish! [*Points to* MADELEINE.] Thank 'er. *She* save your life. Not *me*. . . . It was the *milk* save you. Not the drugs I give you. The milk right away. *That* is what saved you. [*Putting on his glasses and looking curiously at* MADELEINE.] Where you learn that?

MADELEINE

[*Smiling.*] My cousin is a doctor. And I've always been interested in poisons.

DR. VIRANDE

'Ave you indeed? Next time put in some eggs with the milk and carry a little stomach-pump in your waistbelt. Then you not need a doctor at all, and we don't have to wait all these days, see? [*Gathering his instruments and putting them in his bag.*] Now you eat well, sleep well, think well, an' you'll be fine, 'ealthy young lady again. But no "pump, pump," "ha! ha!" Quiet! Rest. Take things easy. [*To* MADELEINE.] So your cousin is a doctor and you love poisons! What are you? A nurse?

MADELEINE

An actress.

DR. VIRANDE

Ah! an actress! Where you play?

MADELEINE

In London. I got permission to stay with Mrs. Carlton.

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DR. VIRANDE

So? I do not know 'ow you *act,* but you are very good nurse. [*To* MARIAN.] She save you—not me.

MARIAN

When can I see my husband?

DR. VIRANDE

[*Evasively.*] Presently! No 'urry.

MARIAN

Today? [*He shakes his head.*] Tomorrow?

DR. VIRANDE

A week from today—per'aps.

MARIAN

A *week!*

DR. VIRANDE

We'll see.

MARIAN

But I'm *well!* I'm strong! Why can't I go today—*now?* [*Trying to rise.*]

DR. VIRANDE

Ah! ah! ah! You want to be ill again? Lie on your back again?

MARIAN

No, no! I'll be careful. Really I will. Only I *must*——

DR. VIRANDE

What I tell you? No excitement! Lie still! There you are. The colour in your cheeks! Your eyes danc-

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ing. Quiet, I tell you. . . . One week from now I see you—and if you are quiet and peaceful—all right.

MARIAN

If I am quiet—and peaceful—may I see him sooner?

DR. VIRANDE

Per'aps. We will see. [*To* MADELEINE.] You move 'er, yes? From 'ere?

MADELEINE

Today if you'll let me.

DR. VIRANDE

You 'ave rooms somewhere?

MADELEINE

[*Hands him slip of paper.*] There.

DR. VIRANDE

[*Glances at paper.*] That will be good. It is quiet. Go *now!* Away with you! The noise! The din! *Mon Dieu!* 'Ow people live in it! Be off.

[MADELEINE *hurries out.* HALE *motions to* MARIAN *to introduce him to* DR. VIRANDE.]

MARIAN

Oh, doctor! My father!

DR. VIRANDE

Your *father? Where? Who?* [*Moves across and shakes* CARLTON *warmly by the hand.*] I am very glad to meet you. *Very* glad.

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CARLTON

That's fine. So am I to meet *you*. Now shake hands with her father. [*Turning him toward* HALE.]

DR. VIRANDE

Oh! [*Looking at* HALE.] *You* 'er father? [*Looks at* MARIAN, *back to* HALE.] *Certainement,* you are! [*Laughs a curious little laugh as he presses* HALE'S *hand: looks at* CARLTON *quizzingly.*] What a mistake!

[MADELEINE *comes in with* MARIAN'S *hat and cloak which she places on the piano. She then calls to* MR. CARLTON *who joins her and they both go into the room* ARTHUR *used to occupy.*]

HALE

[*Shaking the doctor's hand warmly.*] Thank ye, doctor. Thank ye. . . . And God bless ye! I'd like to speak to you for a minute outside.

DR. VIRANDE

You sick?

HALE

No. . . . I'd like to ask you a few questions. [*Tears are in his eyes: his voice breaks.*]

DR. VIRANDE

All right. [*Turns to* MARIAN.] *Au revoir!* Some time tomorrow. And then I see 'ow you obey me. No more "Zit! Zit! Zit!" Gently! Easy! Softly! So! [*Pantomimes resting placidly.*] Then you be—all right. Yes?

MARIAN

I'll sleep tonight. . . . I'm going to get well. . . .

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I'm going to see Arthur. . . . Yes, I'll sleep tonight without drugs.

DR. VIRANDE

Throw them out o' the window. I 'ope you never 'ave to use them again. Congratulations! I 'ad to be *sure*. That is why I keep you waiting so long. A nasty poison. *Very* nasty. We 'ave to be *sure* with it. And I *am*, now. You are safe! *Au revoir!* [*Turns to go.* HALE *walks with him to door.*]

HALE

Got quite a practice in Paris, eh?

DR. VIRANDE

Oh, yes. Pretty fair. But a dear friend of mine wrote me from America that it is better there for the doctors. Ver' much better for the doctors. . . . Vertigo after the jazz. And the nerves break down from keep going all the time. Oh, ver' much better for the doctors. All the time busy. Still Paris ver' good too. Improving every day.

[*Goes out with* HALE.]

MARIAN

[*Hands* TOM *back a letter and photographs he has been shewing her.*] It's nice to see something from home. . . . Oh, I wish I were back. . . . Tom! Have you seen Arthur? . . . Have you? . . . Madeleine won't tell me anything about him. Have you seen him?

TOM

[*Looking away; distressed.*] You love him very much; don't you?

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MARIAN

Of course I do. . . . But differently now. . . . I feel so sorry for him. . . . But I did try to make him happy. To keep his love. . . . I was so afraid of losing him. . . . Instead of helping him I just let myself drift. . . . I tried to be his companion. . . . To please him. . . . So I drank when he did: and danced into the night, and shouted with him. . . . But always during it my heart ached. . . . I was so unhappy. [*Shivers.*] Those horrible days and nights. Noise so that you couldn't think. Laugh for fear you'd cry. Drink to keep yourself going—to deaden feeling. . . . Oh, the tiredness of it. . . . Always tired. . . . To have a pulse beating loudly through you with weariness! [*Shivers as she thinks.*] *He's* had time to escape the sound that kept us prancing, that hateful, deadening sound. . . . And the drink that made us Pagan.

[*The band starts loudly in the restaurant. She starts up with a loud cry, stopping her ears.* HALE *and* MADELEINE *enter and hurry to her.* TOM *shuts the window.* CARLTON *follows* MADELEINE *into the room.*]

It's horrible! Horrible! It's as though all the evil in the world was braying out of those instruments.

MADELEINE

She hasn't heard it for ten days, Mr. Hale.

[*Through the closed window comes the mocking, jeering, laughing note of the dance.*]

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MARIAN

[*To her father.*] We've come a long way from God, haven't we?

HALE

[*Trying to be jovial.*] Oh, I don't know. There's not much——

MARIAN

[*Smiling.*] Harm in it?

HALE

Not a bit.

MARIAN

I used to fancy it vivacious. It is only noise, hideous noise. . . . There is no zest, no richness, no sparkle, no colour, no fire in the life we've been living. . . . I see that now. . . . Just drab, dreary, senseless. . . . It's a craze. . . . A vulgar excitement that needs drink or drugs to endure it. . . . And the utter weariness afterwards. [*Opens windows and listens to the dance music.*] We *have* come a long way from God, father. . . . Listen to that! . . . As though lost souls were crying to their Maker while their bodies writhe in indecent rhythm. It is not a *holy* sound, is it? Oh, father, I feel as tho I could be a prophet to my generation.

CARLTON

No one listens to a prophet, my dear.

HALE

Oh, come, Marian, it's not so bad. When you're well and strong we'll have many a jazz together.

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MARIAN

No, father. It's lost its magic for me.

CARLTON

Thank God! I'm glad to hear it. . . . Why it's ridiculous. London is jigging to it. . . . Paris is deafened by it. It has become the National Anthem of Civilization.

HALE

You take it too seriously, John. Tragedies happened before the world ever took to jazzing.

MARIAN

[*Smiling.*] Oh, father!

CARLTON

Reuben, you're a wonder. No harm in anything.

MARIAN

I hope Arthur can't hear it where he is.

CARLTON

[*Very quietly.*] I'll bet he does.

MARIAN

I don't think so. Madeleine tells me the hospital is on a very quiet street.

[MADELEINE *puts* MARIAN'S *cloak around her and hands her her hat.*]

I hope they don't stare at me. I couldn't bear it. [*Lowers her veil, trembling.*] I couldn't bear it.

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MADELEINE

Of course they won't. We'll go straight thru the hall into the cab.

MARIAN

Oh, how I want to get away from Paris. I want to go home. . . . You are coming, father? [HALE *goes to her.*] Mr. Carlton? [CARLTON *nods and goes to the chair for his hat and coat.*] Will you come with us, Tom?

TOM

I'd like to.

[MARIAN, MADELEINE *and* TOM *go out.*]

MADELEINE

[*As she passes out.*] Everything will be sent after us, Mr. Hale.

HALE

[*Puts on his hat.*] Coming, John?

[*With a crash a deafening jazz dance starts in the tea-room.* CARLTON *thrusts the windows wide open, listens to it contemptuously for a moment, then raises his hat and bows mockingly to it. As the two men go into the corridor*

THE CURTAIN FALLS

The music (!) can be heard for several seconds afterwards triumphantly and deliriously proclaiming its right to the proud distinction CARLTON *conferred on it, in this year 1921:—*

Civilization's National Anthem.]

THE END OF THE PLAY

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